

2003-Eckhart Tolle Retreat Realizing The Power Of Now-Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 59:36)

Welcome to our retreat. I trust everybody can hear me. I also trust that nobody is waiting for me to start because everybody here knows that we are here to give up waiting as a state of mind, normal state of mind, and that there's another state of mind, or rather, no mind, in which you're not waiting for the next moment.

That's why we are here, to discover that state of no mind, awareness, you could call it, or deepen it. We are not here to add anything to what we know. We know enough, enough to have come here.

So we are here to discover that thinking is not the only possible state for humans, and not the highest state. And as we go through the shift from thinking to awareness, thinking first of all loses its predominant place in our lives, and as a side product of losing its predominant place in our lives, it actually becomes more effective. Thinking becomes more effective, less destructive, not destructive anymore.

So no answer here is going to come if you're looking for the answer on the level of thinking, or on the level of adding something to your mind. The answer lies in stepping beyond thinking, simply by allowing what is, which is now, allowing what is to be as it is, because it is. And you discover that the compulsion to think is to a large extent connected with not being willing to allow what is to be as it is now, because there's a little mind-made entity, consists of thinking and accumulated thought patterns, that thrives on resistance to what is, and on reactivity, and is always looking for the next thing to get a little bit bigger.

It's never quite enough. This little me is never quite enough. Most of you have come here because there is at work within you something that goes far beyond the personal, something that is an expression of the evolutionary impulse of the universe.

On the surface level it looks as if a person had chosen to come here, but it is also possible that one or two have come here expecting something they're not going to get. What's that? More.

More experiences, more knowledge, more beliefs, more opinions. So if there are one or two who have come here expecting more, then they might want to leave. As soon as they discover there's no more.

Or they suddenly, after, if they can endure the discomfort that arises when the need for more is not met, and don't run away immediately, they can endure the discomfort, they may be able to break through that mind pattern. Please pay attention. I often say that at

the beginning of talks, especially retreats.

Please pay attention, not just to the words, but to the silent spaces between the words. That's where the shift happens. In that alertness that is required to acknowledge or to listen to that dimension of stillness that underlies the words and is in between the words.

That is why we're here. And that's not an adding to, because that is discovering something that's already there, but had been ignored. Just as I was coming here, this beautiful night, in this incredibly beautiful place, I took off my shoes and I looked up at the sky, clear sky, stars, brilliant points of light.

And there is something, when you look up there, there's something that is so easily overlooked, but should be obvious to anybody who looks up there. It can tell you something about the nature of the universe. When you look up, what do you see?

You see little points of light. You see, basically, there are two dimensions there. Objects, celestial objects, suns, planets, the moon, galaxies, billions, trillions.

So there are celestial objects, things, objects in space, and there's space. The universe consists of things. You can look, it's so obvious.

There are things in space, and there's the vastness of space. The things are that which is manifested. But when you look up, what produces the feeling of awe, of the feeling of infinity, is the vastness of space.

The depths of it, which is inconceivable, has no end. It is such that even our neighboring galaxy, our next-door neighbor in terms of galactic neighbors, the Andromeda galaxy, if you traveled at the speed of light, which is very fast, 300,000 kilometers per second, which is the distance from here to the moon in one second, is the speed of light. If you traveled at the speed of light to our neighboring galaxy, and there are billions of galaxies, the closest one to us, it would take you 2.3 million years to reach it at the speed of light. 2.3 million years. Such is the depth, the vastness of space. And what is out there applies also, the so-called external universe, applies also to the so-called inner universe.

There is also within you things, let's keep it simple, things and space in your life. Now, things, it is obvious that your life is surrounded by things. There are many things in your life, physical things.

In many people's lives, there are so many physical things to deal with that they are constantly running after the next physical thing that they need to deal with. They may have a house, they may have this and this, and everything demands attention. Their entire attention is absorbed by the things that surround them.

And it's just at the moment just talking about physical things. This is needed, and that's

needed, and that. And then there's the belief that there are not enough physical things yet.

I need some more, because I don't feel quite complete yet. And then there are other things in a wider sense, all the things that make up your life situation, conditions of your life, events. Things are constantly happening, and constantly new things pop up.

Oh, thanks. So it's not just physical things, all kinds of things make up your life situation, what people call my life. But I say it's only your life situation.

They don't know what their life is. Their life situation consists of an accumulation of events, things happening, situations, demanding attention. Everything saying, this is important, give me attention.

So there's the pull of things, not just physical things, the pull of situations, of demanding it. So it's the world, the world, your world, consisting of things that need to be dealt with. And it's never quite enough time to deal with it all.

And when you've dealt with one thing here, there are three more things cropped up there. And so that's, people go through life with that pull into the world of things. Doesn't leave you alone for long.

And on a primordial level, on a basic primordial level, all the world of things starts with thoughts. Because all the things, whether they are physical, or events, or situations in your life, really only exist in you as thought. Nobody knows whether actually there's anything out there at all.

Because what reaches you, they say, sense perception happens, your visual, auditory, and so on, is translated into nerve impulses that reach the brain. And it's then, those impulses are decoded. And then some kind of world picture emerges.

Oh, this is what's going on. Nobody actually knows what's out there beyond the impulses that are being received and decoded. And some kind of world picture is put together, so that some philosophers have even doubted there's anything out there at all.

And it could just be a dream. And there are certain indications that it is a dream. It's in the nature of dreams to be fleeting, to evaporate very quickly.

It's in the nature of situations in your life, whatever condition, any situation, everything is fairly fleeting. It's there, one moment, it has gone the next. Where was yesterday?

What happened yesterday? When you first wake up in the morning, you might think, was it a dream or did it happen? And then you meet some other people who agree that it did happen.

But it could be that these other people are part of your dream. So all the things that

seem to be out there, the world of things, is really an inner phenomenon. It's to do with mind, to do with thought.

We don't need to take any position here. We don't need to say, yes, the external world exists, or no, the external world does not exist. Very often, the answer is both or neither.

The answer is not yes or no. From one perspective, it's yes. From another perspective, no.

So most people's life is filled up with things, which on the most basic level means thoughts, mind movement. One could say objects that appear in your consciousness, one after the other. And sometimes they are battling for this.

One thought, another thought. So the people's lives are crammed full with that mind stuff. And you can see it in people's faces, the way they lead their lives, the way they interact with others.

What you can see is, very often, the absence of space. Well, it can't be absent, but they don't know it's there anymore. All they know is things that appear.

That any sense of space is gone. And so, they experience their life as a continuous stream of... I'm quoting Churchill again, as I love to do, who defined history as one damn thing after another.

And if you ask many people about their personal lives, they might give you the same answer. How's your life been up to this point? One damn thing after another.

And the next damn thing comes just in the moment when you thought, now you've made it. Success at last. Recognition.

Everybody loves me. And then everybody wants something from you. Now, fortunately, I have nothing to give on the level of things, although sometimes people demand things, but that's not what I have to give.

And no spiritual teacher has to give things. No true spiritual teacher is here to give you things, anything on the level of... But simply to show you the possibility of living not obsessed with things.

And I'm using that now in a wider sense. I don't just mean obsessed with physical things. It's a tiny aspect of it.

Obsessed with things also means possessed by things, and it means possessed by thought, totally in the grip of thought, one after another and after another and another and another. And to derive your entire sense of identity from that stream of one damn thing after another. Me.

There's a me in every thought. There's a me in every emotion, in every reaction. There's a sense of me.

And my relationship to the world is a me against the rest of the world. That's the battle I have to fight. Defending me.

Completing me. And looking out for more things, either to defend myself against or to accumulate, to take on this part of me. So to show the spiritual teacher is here, and the spiritual teacher is not separate from you.

This event here is happening in your consciousness. You don't know that I'm actually here. Outside of your consciousness, I'm in you.

So that voice that you hear is arising within you. Of course it is. There may be nothing out here.

It could all be an illusion, but the voice is there. It's arising in you. And so it's pointing to the possibility of living in a different way.

A life that is not a burden and a continuous seeking and continuous conflict. The possibility of being aware of inner space. In which, yes, in which the world of things still happens.

In which, yes, thought still happens. And yet, to be aware of a dimension of consciousness that we could call space consciousness. Because as we saw, and as you can verify when you look up into the sky tonight, there's objects out there and there's space.

That's basically what the world consists of. And the two dimensions are within you. And humans have become lost in one.

So we are here to realize that dimension. And I'm not saying you are going to realize it. It cannot be realized in the future.

It cannot be made into an object of a search. Because it's here now. The moment you are looking for it, you create a future.

Now what is future? It's a thought form. Apart from that, there is no future except as a thought form.

It cannot come except as now. So it's now, the arising of space consciousness or the realization of space consciousness is here now. For example, it happens when you acknowledge not only the words that you hear.

Acknowledge simply means pay attention. Notice. Easy.

It is not a big thing. Just notice. Just as noticing here there are two dimensions just the same as when you look up into the sky at night.

You will find there are two dimensions. There are the words here and there's a silent space or stillness in which the words happen. There are gaps in the words occasionally, little gaps.

And even as the words are spoken, there's an underlying still, silent space. The simple act of noticing that, that's all that's needed for space consciousness to be present in you. And you cannot grasp it and say, now I have it, because it becomes an object again.

It's an underlying field. So simply the simple awareness of the spaces is space consciousness. And you notice it's still and it doesn't involve thinking.

It is a short interval of not thinking. When you notice a silent space, just noticing it. It is not through thought that you noticed it.

It is possible that after a second later, thought comes in and says, oh there was a silent space. But then you are not noticing it anymore. It becomes a memory.

It becomes a thought. And it becomes, it's transformed by thought into an object. So this is this very simple.

This is something to practice. And even practice isn't the right word. It's too simple to say practice.

It's a way of being, of being aware of two dimensions. Manifested, unmanifested. And if you can move through life, being aware of the two, not losing touch with space consciousness, then life, even the life of things, things, even the manifested life, becomes quite pleasant.

Not that you can totally escape from the polarities that are inherent, the polar opposites of the universe, the manifested universe, which means the thing that makes you happy today can easily turn around and make you unhappy tomorrow. And that which makes you unhappy today can turn around and you can suddenly see, oh, it's led to something great. The other polarity came.

And any situation you go into in this world, which is the world of things, will have one side to it, an upside and a downside. Anybody who has made it in the eyes of the world knows that making it has a downside, considerable downside. And, or you make it and then you lose it.

But that is no longer the source of suffering, as it is when you only know the world of things. You have an expectation from everything, every situation, every person in your life. You have certain expectations, which deep down, if you look at it, is saying,

complete me.

Give me what I need. Make me happy. And then it doesn't.

Nothing, no thing in this world can do that. Thing, in a wider sense, no situation, no person, no condition, can make you feel complete. As long as your entire sense of identity is trapped in object consciousness, me, my story, what can I add to it to make it more complete, to complete me?

You can temporarily add things that feel great. I have achieved, I'm now the greatest this or that. And then you see, it doesn't take long before you experience the downside of being the greatest this or that.

And even, even a deeply spiritual person like Einstein, he didn't walk around thinking, I'm the greatest. People had this projection. They said, you are the greatest genius that ever lived.

And he said, this is very strange what people, the opinion that people have of me. I didn't really, and he felt his life wasn't, he had missed the most important thing. He couldn't quite up with the final answer, whatever he called it.

I can't remember. Unified field theory, to explain the entire universe. Here it is.

But Einstein was a rare phenomenon. He had breakthroughs into space consciousness. And that's where his, the realization that did come to him, came from as all creative thought comes to those who, even if only for short moments, can break through into space consciousness, into stillness, into that empty space, the inner space, which empty is a misleading word.

It's intelligence itself. So we are here for that to arise within. Because the world can't go on in its deluded state, its lopsided, unbalanced state for much longer.

It would simply self-destruct. And then that's fine. Space was never, space is fine.

You can't do anything to it, no matter how mad the world is. And mad means only knowing one dimension, not knowing the other dimension. That's all.

And so, it begins, as we sit here, being aware of spacious stillness and the words. Then you're not looking for the next word, because you're, you're rooted in something that's deeper than object consciousness. And the words don't come from accumulated knowledge.

They actually come out of space consciousness. It's almost as if space consciousness were saying, come home, because the essence of your being is that. What Buddhists call emptiness, or what Hindus call the self, not the little self, the one self, the kingdom of heaven, they all point to that.

Nothing else matters here. Thought, whatever thoughts come into your head while you're here, are not that important. They will want to be important.

This is, you need to ask this question now, ask this question, ask, ask. And I'm not saying don't ask. There will be questions.

But many questions start with, have a compulsive quality, which is the importance of this mental position. And they may start with, yes, but, so what are you saying? I mean, I still don't understand what you mean by space consciousness.

Of course not. Do you think I understand it? As the Zen master said to his disciple, do you understand Zen?

And the disciple, no master. And master says, neither do I. Now, many understandings arise out of that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension.

But you cannot understand that dimension in itself. It would be absurd. It would be space conscious, object consciousness trying to understand the unmanifested.

The manifested, which is a tiny temporary form, trying to understand the vastness of the infinite. Of course, but many realizations, understandings, insights arise out of the state of connectedness, yes. But in itself, you will always remain totally ignorant of that in itself.

It cannot be known whatsoever, as you know an object in consciousness. It cannot be known, because it is the essence of all knowing. It can't, you can't make it into an object.

And so that is, the strange thing then is, what appears is that state of connectedness with that unmanifested dimension, appears to the human mind, to object consciousness, it appears as a state of ignorance, as it appears as a state of not knowing anything anymore. And yet, that is not the case. You cannot know that state.

But as you enter that state, all language, by the way, arises from, is derived from object consciousness and is itself object consciousness. Therefore, whatever we say, when we point to the unmanifested, already contains an error built into it, because it contains a limitation. All language and all thought does that.

That's why the great sage Lao Tse who wrote the beautiful and profound, one of the most profound books, the Tao Te Ching, the first line, the Tao that can be spoken of, is not the true Tao. Of course not. Or if you want to find a modern translation, if you can't talk about it, it's, that's not it.

But knowing that, it's fine to talk about it. And that's why Lao Tse continued writing the book when he said you can't talk about it. But once it's been pointed out, that then you don't mistake the words for it, and you find some little contradiction in the words.

Of course there's contradiction in the words the moment they point to the unmanifested. So you have to look beyond that. And so, this is only one way, in many ways, as we spend our retreat here, in many ways the dimension of the unmanifested, which we could call the divine, which we could call God.

I don't use that very often, because the moment you say God, you have an object in consciousness, a concept. A little bit better, a little bit less confining would be to say the infinite. God is, is a closed concept.

It's God is here, I'm here, God is here, and the table is there. It's, the infinite doesn't have clear boundaries around it. Hmm, where does it begin and start?

And you can't claim possession of it so easily. You can say my God and your God, but my infinite and your infinite doesn't work. So when you use a different term, you can see how absurd it is to say my God and your God.

So in many ways, that dimension, the infinite, arises here. And this is only one way that I suggest. Pay attention, not just to the words, but to the underlying field.

Notice it. Hmm. And as you go into nature, that is another way, and we will be going into that again in more detail.

Also there, you can be aware. I don't know if you noticed when you first arrive here, maybe when you are, you get out of the car, or I came on this little seaplane, and the moment the engine stops, and it comes in, and your pilot opens the little door, it's so still here. Of course there are few noises, birds and occasionally some human noise, but not often, and little noises here and there, water splashing, insects buzzing, but mostly it's so still, so still.

And that's why it's very helpful to be in a place like this, where on a simple auditory level, you're not bombarded with things, noisy things. And so it's so easy here to be aware of that vast stillness, to simply notice it. And certain people who are totally trapped in mind, when they are in stillness, they are looking for some kind of noise to interpret through their mind.

And if they can catch a bird and then say something about it, they feel very lucky. Ah, that is, it's such, not, not, I'm not dismissing all knowledge, but here we don't need it. There may be a place for that kind of thing, but here you can notice, if you're totally trapped in mind, you're looking for some, the stillness would be unbearable almost, and you would want to try and ignore it, and look for some noise that you can have a relationship with, or interpret, or talk about, or think about, or compare, or classify.

And some so-called nature lovers, who know a lot about insects and birds and flowers, they miss. If they cannot free themselves from their knowledge and enter the state of not knowing, at least temporarily, just least, then they don't know that. So here the

wonderful opportunity is simply to notice that dimension.

And it is, I can't say it often enough, the simple fact of noticing is enough for that to arise, because that is the arising of it. And in that moment of noticing that field of stillness, there's no movement of thought in that moment. And I am certain that in many of you, in your ordinary life, that dimension of consciousness already is arising.

And you may not even know it. It seems strange that you cannot, you may not even know it. The mind, to the mind, it's totally insignificant.

It's nothing. So it doesn't, it will immediately deny it. The mind means thoughts.

The strange thing happened when a shift of consciousness happened to this person, what looks like a person, a shift of consciousness happened, and I walked around this city, which happened to be London, after being totally burdened by an endless obsessive stream of problematic thinking, mostly concerned with me, suddenly there was freedom from that. And I walked around the city, just looking at everything, and feeling very peaceful, blissful, such deep peace. And only a year later, I'm saying this because I just said you might not even notice that this is arising in you, only a year later, all I knew is deep peace.

Why? I didn't know. It was wonderful, but I didn't know why.

I saw a Zen master, and he just said a little thing about Zen is simply stop thinking. The ending of thought is no thought. That's it.

Oh, no thought. And then I realized that I actually had had not much thought since then, since it happened. That's where the peace came from.

But I didn't even know that thought had come to an end. Not completely. When it was needed, it was there.

So in many of you, moments of pure awareness, another way of putting it, are there, and you may not even know it, but now you can be more aware of that process, that shift accelerates and deepens as you become aware of it. And this is very subtle. We'll go into the subtleties of that shift during this retreat, how it is connected with sense perceptions, and so on.

We'll also, during this retreat, spend some time in silence. I'll let you know. I recommend it, highly recommend it, for certain periods of time here.

Whatever thought comes into your head, don't take it too seriously, because even thinking then exists within that spaciousness. There's another silly thought. Oh, and another one, and another.

And then you'll notice thoughts that you've had for years. Same thing. It's fine.

And the thought says, yes, but this, this is how it is. It's not how it is. It's a thought about it.

And we realize that all thought is limited, relative, a little perspective, one of many, many possible perspectives on anything, any situation, any human being, yourself, tiny perspective. And then another perspective is also true. And another one is also be true.

So you don't totally believe that any one thought can hold the entire truth about any situation or person. It can't. So thought becomes, you have a spacious relationship to thought.

So when the thought comes into your head, what a creep this guy is, then you don't totally believe in it anymore. Perhaps that is one perspective, but every human being contains the possibilities that are inherent in the whole of humanity. The creep is also a saint.

May not, perhaps not yet manifested. It's there. So you don't totally believe in that anymore.

It's just one perspective on this human being. And when you go to sleep tonight, go to sleep. There's no television here, so I don't need to say, don't watch television.

Don't even read a book, let alone the paper that you brought. Let's just see how the stock market is doing. Just go to, when you are in bed, lie, take attention away from the stream of thinking, place it into the body.

There's a space of the inner body. Be aware of that. Sense that.

At first sight that might appear an object that arises in your consciousness, but it's actually deeper than that. You can go to that, through that doorway into space consciousness. The aliveness that you sense in the inner body.

And you go to sleep from there, not from thinking. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, some silly thought may come into your head. What am I doing here?

So, so much stuff at home that I should be dealing with. This isn't getting me anywhere. All, you know, but thoughts.

Recognize it as thought. So the thought is within spaciousness. And then sense, feel the inner body.

And you don't take thoughts that seriously. Now, I will officially open this retreat with a ceremony, minimum ceremony. Thank you.

You may just want to sit for just a little bit as this body moves away. And then when you feel ready, you will find yourself getting up, moving to your room as a walking field of

awareness.

[Speaker 2] (59:48 - 1:00:07)

This concludes session one of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session two.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:35 - 2:13:33)

If the microphone comes close enough, maybe words will come out. We can't have an empty tape. So we could.

Space consciousness. One hour of space consciousness. That, of course, is presence.

Another word or signpost. Occasionally I switch, without any intention, any prior intention, signposts. They all point to the same central core.

But sometimes one signpost works better for certain people. Oh, space. Inner space.

The possibility of knowing that inner space. Not dualistically. To become aware.

This sounds almost like a paradox. To become aware, not only of all the things that happen in awareness, such as sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions, including all the events and the drama and so on, earth drama. To become aware, not only of those things that come up continuously, one thing after another.

Everybody's aware of that. And everybody's drawn into that and fascinated by that and desires that and fears that. All the things that are coming up.

But also, the possibility of becoming aware of the space of awareness itself. That is, ultimately all techniques, meditation techniques, are designed to bring you to that awareness. They have built into them a counterproductive drawback, no matter how wonderful they are, in that every technique places itself between you and the essence of who you are.

So it's the belief that through this technique I reach the essence of who I am. And so you've placed something there, which is not really necessary, saying this without wanting to take away from you any techniques that you are using. But techniques tend to create time.

And to find the awareness that underlies every thought, out of which every thought comes, out of which every sense perception comes, that space is the very essence of all that appears, out of which it comes. It can only be here now. Why create steps towards it?

It's here now. It's to be recognized now, at this moment, as the space of awareness. It

recognizes itself.

Because when I say, you become aware of awareness, creates the idea of some dualistic thing. I become aware of awareness. No.

When we speak about it, it sounds dualistic. Language structure is like that. Every sentence has a subject and an object.

But what happens is, self-awareness is what happens. Awareness becomes aware of itself. Whereas it had been only aware of the ways in which it manifested as form.

And that is a kind of dream. Awareness maybe wanted to dream the dream of form and totally identified with form. And then suddenly, oh, there's a spaciousness.

And that is an amazing thing, when you even get a glimpse of inner spaciousness. And it could happen here, at this moment. And you can't grasp it, and you can't understand it, and not even memorize it.

I remember space. It doesn't work. Because there's nothing to remember.

I once had it. That's an illusion, too. And then I lost it.

That's another illusion. And so that is, at first it's so subtle, perhaps, that you hardly notice. But then it can be suddenly very intense.

The Indians in India called it, it is blissful to be aware of that. It is the bliss of awareness, of being, of consciousness. Being, consciousness, bliss, satchitananda.

They string the three words together as one. In ordinary life, this can arise. Here, and is already arising in you, but perhaps so short-lived, still, that you don't, it's immediately obscured by object consciousness.

Object consciousness, as opposed to space consciousness. They're not different consciousnesses, it's a different manifestation of consciousness. The manifested, the unmanifested, one consciousness.

Now you may notice something interesting, and you can pay attention to that, particularly here, as you walk through nature, and you look at many different beautiful things, beings, plants, trees, animals, blades of grass, flowers, clouds, the sea. All this sense perception happens. And if you're alert, you will notice the moment something new enters your field of vision.

Let's say your head is moving, and suddenly you make contact with the flower, or whatever it may be. Whenever something new suddenly arises in your field of vision, we're just talking at the moment about visual perception. There is a space, when it first enters your visual perception, there is a space in which it is not being labeled or

interpreted.

There is a space of clear awareness in which the perception happens. The mind hasn't had time yet to work out what it all means, to call it something, to find some relationship towards it, with it. It hasn't had time yet to retrieve from its data bank all that it knows, or all the associations that it has that are connected with that sense perception.

The first one is the name of that thing. The name hasn't been retrieved yet. It's working hard to retrieve it.

And then the associations. My Aunt Mary had that flower in her garden. That hasn't happened yet.

So whenever something new arises in your field of vision, there's a moment in which the sense perception arises in a field of pure awareness. In other words, we could say within a field of stillness. And you know what it is that you're looking at without having any labels for it.

You don't reduce it to a label, a name, call it this or that. There is a mystery remains, but there is a deep connectedness with that which you are looking at, a oneness, when it's not labeled yet. It's not interpreted yet.

And so if you are alert, you can see that this is naturally that space consciousness already is there in you arising. Now, there may be certain people who are so burdened with dense mind movements. They don't, they can look at a flower and not see it.

They can look at a tree and not see it. The tree happens in the distant periphery of their awareness, distant. And all their awareness is being absorbed by thought processes.

And that's where they are. One could say they are absent completely. Their entire awareness is being made into thinking.

Thinking uses up that. It looks as if they were looking, and they may be looking, but they're not seeing. There's a kind of blindness.

And many people who go for walks every day go in that state. But they're entirely in their thought processes. For them, it would require a shock to bring them to a point of awakening.

Awakening means always awakening out of the stream of thinking, so that some awareness comes out of thought, is retrieved from thought, is taken back from thought, and is there as pure awareness, formless consciousness, unconditioned consciousness. So for people who are totally immersed, it requires a shock. For example, it could happen they're walking through the woods, thinking about the stock market, and what's going to do, and what's going to do to me, and what it has already done.

And suddenly, well, if you're in Canada, it could happen, a bear suddenly appears in front of you. And then immediately you stop thinking about the stock market, because you realize the bear is much more important than the stock market. And suddenly there's an alertness.

And thought stops, because you can't, what can you think about it? And if thought does not come back again, there's a good chance that it will remain, thought will remain out of the way. Then you will take action, whatever action is needed, you will find yourself doing it.

It doesn't arise out of thinking, spontaneous. It comes out of, you cannot afford in emergency situations, you cannot afford to be thinking, hmm, I could do this, or that, or that. And sometimes it happens that people who are totally immersed could get other kinds of shocks through great loss in their lives, bigger shocks than just a bear appearing in front of you.

Bears are usually harmless. Most bear and human encounters are fine, except when humans carry guns. Other bigger shocks may come to shake the edifice of object consciousness.

The way in which my life had been arranged neatly, and the explanations and interpretations, ways in which I interpret my life, through some disaster, personal, they're all personal or collective, which means it happens, one disaster happens to a large number of people at the same time. So, as witnessed last year in New York, but continuously on the planet in other places, similar things also happen, collective disasters, great loss, some form of death. Death means something in object consciousness dissolves, an object in consciousness dissolves.

Something leaves you, and you might have associated that with a sense of self. So that's why it feels like death. Something that was part of your sense of self dissolves suddenly.

Life does that. It does that to humans. It's there to do that.

It's not there to keep you happy in the dream world. It takes things away. It's suddenly, it's gone.

And anything you lose leaves behind an empty space. Anything you lose in your life, it could be a simple thing like a belonging, or a greater, a deeper loss. The deeper the loss, the greater the space that it leaves behind.

And if you've never encountered space, inner space before, that is a dreadful shock, when for the first time in your life, you encounter deep loss, or the possibility of imminent loss. But if you are already somewhat familiar with space consciousness, you recognize that, which is left behind, where once there was something, or somebody, now there's nothing, or nobody, an emptiness, a space. And this is how quite often people

who have never had access to spiritual teaching have gone through a shift in consciousness, through encountering great loss.

And somehow they couldn't run away from it anymore. It was just, they had to, they were speechless, couldn't explain it, interpret it, fit it into some kind of philosophical framework, where it still, it all makes sense, even that collapsed. And there was just the empty space, and suddenly they felt great peace.

Couldn't explain why. It didn't seem to make sense. Because space consciousness suddenly comes through that opening.

And so that is, you can say you find God through loss. That's one way. And initially loss is painful, suffering.

So indirectly you could say you can find God through suffering. Or the easier way, you can come to here. And encounter the space, inner space.

And you can look at a tree and realize you don't need to label it. That is an enormous shift in consciousness. And you can sit here and listen to the words without needing to label, just let them be.

And be aware of the space at the same time in which the words happen. Presence, beingness. A field of alertness.

A field of just presence. And they are the words. Otherwise the words will be analyzed by your mind, and it will be stuck on the level of signposts or words.

And then the mind might say, this sometimes happens when people come to write an article or something, because they need to, what's this all about? And then they say maybe, his teaching is a mixture of Buddhism, Advaita, Vedanta, and mystical Christianity. Oh, that is the illusion of knowledge.

And if you write that in an exam, you will get high marks. It's the illusion that when you have found a few labels, you know what it is. And that same illusion, of course, is everywhere in one's life, of mistaking mental labels for true knowing.

This applies to the flower, and you think you know when you can call it something, and the depth and mystery of that incredible being escapes you, because you think you know. And then, in human relationships, it gets even worse. Because when you think you know another human being, or yourself, through some accumulation of labels in your head, and then you do it to other people, and you do it to yourself, you mistake a few sounds in the head for the reality.

And that's what you relate to then, a screen of labels. That's Mary. And you know all about her.

Let me tell you about Mary. I know her so well. And John, oh yeah, I'll tell you what he's like.

And me, let me tell you my story. And again, deriving your sense of self from a story, a storyline in the head. So, you see how vital it is to discover the possibility of looking at a flower or a tree without interpreting it, because that's the beginning, that's the shift.

And sitting here, and listening, and looking, being aware, auditory perceptions, visual perceptions, and being aware of the space, the silent gaps in which all this happens. It's an amazing thing to find that inner space in which this happens. I mentioned noticing the gaps, noticing the silent spaces here between the words, the underlying field, which is consciousness.

I don't even want to use that label because the label is not it. There's always any word, there's a danger that now you know. Consciousness.

You are consciousness. Oh, now I know. But you only know yourself as consciousness if you can become comfortable with a state of not knowing.

There's something in you that loves that. The state wants to arise, and there's something else in you that says, no, don't go there. You won't know what's going on anymore.

And another way of inviting that state, if we can even call it that, is the beautiful little or big portal that is called, above the portal is written, allow. The portal is the present moment. So if you allow this moment to be as it is, then this moment, no matter what form it takes, they shift continuously.

No matter what form it takes, this moment becomes an opening for what I now sometimes call space consciousness, unconditioned to arise, which is peace also. The form that this moment takes may look like an enormous obstacle to the possibility of space consciousness or peace. Oh, I can't allow this, this dreadful situation, this.

Yes. Whatever it is, if it is internally not resisted, and you recognize that there's ultimately no arguing with it, because whatever is already is. And so whatever is is also part of the totality with the web with which it is connected to the whole.

It couldn't really be otherwise. It is as it is because the totality has brought this moment about, the form that it takes. There are no isolated events.

They appear to be isolated events, but what looks to the analytical mind like an isolated event is connected to everything else in the cosmos. The cosmos doesn't consist of isolated bits and pieces. It's a web, a oneness.

It is, one could say, one whole. It is an organism, at one totality, all connected. Physicists know that now.

Buddhists have known it for a long time, that all is connected to everything else. So the is-ness is as it is because there is a certain inevitability to this moment. And that is good to see, because the mind says, no, this shouldn't be, or should not have been, didn't have to be, but it is.

I don't want it to be, but it is. So when you see that, it is perhaps a little easier to walk through the portal that is called the portal of this moment. And then, no matter what form it takes, they might have crucified you.

You're on the cross in agony. And then you say, okay, not my will, but thy will be done. Thy, not addressing an entity of many other entities, but thy is the one, the totality, the one intelligence.

And so they surrender complete acceptance, complete allowing of this internal non-resistance and internal alignment with is. This looked, how can I, the most dreadful thing to be crucified is a symbol, one of the deepest symbols of humanity, which you don't have to be a Christian to understand it. Most Christians don't really understand the depth of it.

They understand a surface. That's not it. And so in the beautiful image, what seemed like an obstacle to peace, to the arising of space consciousness, not here, not now, surely can't do it here.

And yet suddenly with that, yes, the allowing, the cross becomes a symbol for the divine. And the cross is any situation that you encounter that looks bad, bad. And you allow it because it is, and you don't interpret it.

Allowing means you also relinquish the interpretation or if an automatic interpretation is still running in your mind, you recognize it as the tape that is still running in your mind or the CD that is still running. Same thought, better sound. Doesn't make much difference.

And so you recognize that thought movement has a certain momentum and the same words may still arise in your mind. But yet you recognize that that is a thought movement. So there is a spaciousness that is there even as certain thoughts still happen.

You have a spacious relationship then to your own thought processes. You are no longer hanging in there with your entire sense of self in every thought, believing in every thought, which is only a tiny fragment, any thought you can have about any body or anything. It's a tiny fragment.

And believing that it contains the truth. That's the root of all the dreadful wars and senseless violence, is to believe in my interpretation of this situation. And not recognize it as my perspective or our.

It's the same collective ego. Our interpretation, this is how we see it. No, this is the truth.

And then whoever doesn't share your mental position becomes the enemy. And that happens on a personal level and it happens collectively. A complete absence of space around the thoughts.

And somebody realized that. I mentioned at the talk in Vancouver last week, I read in the New York Times, an Israeli writer was writing about the madness that's happening in the Middle East. And he saw something there.

Perhaps he didn't quite see the depths of what he saw, the deeper implications of what he saw, but he saw something that is the beginning of the root of all that suffering that humans are inflicting on each other. And he called it an inability to accommodate a competing narrative. What he calls narrative, of course, is an interpretation or a story in your head.

And so in those people who are involved in deeply entrenched conflict situations, and this doesn't have to be collective, it can be on a personal level too, there's the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, which is another story, another perspective, another fragment. So we can say a complete absence of space around the thought, a complete identification with the thought as me, as a self. Complete self-identification with thinking.

And that creates the other. It creates the enemy. It even loves the enemy, that mind-made me.

Because the boundary around the me gets strengthened through having the other who is against me. My mental position gets strengthened through having to fight some other mental position that strengthens my own mental position, and the contraction that goes with it. And we feel stronger then.

Our sense of identity, the more we can fight with others, the stronger we feel in our sense of self, the more we suffer, yes, but we don't see that. The more unhappy we become, yes, but to the egoic, this entity, unhappiness is great. It confuses pain and pleasure.

It loves pain. Because while you are fighting, you think you know who you are. The delusion gets strengthened.

So you can see how deep this goes, how vital it is that humanity goes through this shift in consciousness now, because you see this, what we are addressing here lies at the root of this dysfunction that is on the planet now. The collective human mind and what it has done and what it is doing on this planet, the enormous destruction and suffering. So we are here because within each of us, the evolutionary impulse is at work, to make the shift from one level to a different level.

It's the possibility has always been there, even 3,000 years ago, with Buddha, one of the first, perhaps, who saw with Jesus and others, the possibility was there, but not yet the necessity for humanity as a whole to make the shift. And now, yes, this teaching is not different from the truth that the ancient teachings are pointing to. And yet, there is an added intensity to it.

There's an added power behind it now. On a personal level, it may look as if maybe you had come here because you couldn't stand the suffering anymore. As you know, through suffering, it can happen too, because suffering is resistance.

When you can't stand it anymore, you suddenly allow what is to be. That's one way. And for many of you, that has already worked in your life.

You've done it. You've had the suffering. Maybe still do sometimes.

In waves, it comes. A wave. And resistance is there.

And suddenly, you can't stand it anymore, and there's a relinquishing of resistance. You allow. And suddenly, peace is there.

In the midst of, perhaps, turmoil. Resist not evil, says Jesus. A deep truth.

And on the deepest level, there is a goodness that is beyond what we perceive on the surface as good and bad. What we thought the mind cannot comprehend that. So here, we step out of the cage, the trap of object consciousness as much as possible.

That is the opportunity here without suffering. If suffering comes here, fine. That's fine too.

Occasionally, it may happen, even here. In the midst of paradise, it could happen. A little thing isn't going the way it should be going, even in paradise.

This isn't how it should be. I want to have my own room. I wanted to have my own room and not having somebody snore next to me.

I haven't come here for that. If I'd stayed at home, I could be more peaceful than here. These are thoughts that can go through your mind.

Do you completely need to believe in those thoughts? No. They're just thoughts.

A little perspective, not the truth. And you can often then smile when certain thoughts come. Many of the strong thought movements are reactive.

You react to something in your environment. And it may be good to know that there is, even though in all of you, the unconditioned space consciousness presence is arising, there is still, maybe dormant right now, there is still a little egoic entity, a little me, that

maybe now is not very much in the background. It's connected to accumulated pain from your past, the pain body, the emotional pain that humans carry from long, long ago, racial pain, humanity's pain.

Every human carries some of that. And the little mind made egoic entity, which is a story of me, derives a lot of its force from its link with collective old human emotional pain. So that entity and the pain body, as I call it, go together.

They are really one. And that may be dormant now, but it's not gone completely. You might think it's gone completely until something happens.

It is very often what it is looking for is something to react to. And it can do that even in the middle of a beautiful retreat place like here. It can find something, certainly, to react to.

And that can then, the mind movement and the emotional movement associated with the reaction, can obliterate paradise. And you become a reactive entity. And you may think of going home.

I'm saying that because it might happen to you. And so knowing that it might happen, you could catch it when it happens. Catch it doesn't mean that you catch it and hold it down.

So catch it with your attention. Catch it in the field of awareness and see it. Otherwise, it might take you over and you may not wake up until you're already on the ferry.

And then the next reaction will come. And the next thought movement associated with pain will come. And it'll say, you see, you have failed miserably.

You've wasted an opportunity for enlightenment. Can't win. First it finds a perfect excuse for leaving and blaming.

And then it blames the next thing. That's you. So see if you can catch it when it comes.

And it's sometimes the most insignificant things become the trigger. It obliterates everything else that can happen. So catching it is a wonderful thing.

Catching it, you might lead you into the era of believing that this shouldn't be happening to you. But that's not the case. It's wonderful that you can see it happening to you.

If you can't see it happening to you, you become it. Well, okay, you're asleep. And you have to just wait until you wake up.

But the likelihood of you catching it is much greater here. Catch the reactive movement. So this is something to watch in yourself and also in others.

Because another way of reacting is to react to somebody's reaction. That's a favorite way of reacting. Just watch that also.

Because somebody close to you may be reacting to something. What do you do then? You shouldn't be.

Wake up! You shouldn't be here if you're so unconscious. How did you even get here?

So, and then you just remember the portal called allow. The form that this moment takes. And the form is this human being, this situation.

And suddenly there is space around that also, that other person's reaction. That is the space that comes through you, one could say. Ultimately, there's not you and the other.

But from a limited perspective, one could say that you, what you bring to the situation is space. And perhaps the other person doesn't have the space at that time. At that moment.

And you bring it by allowing this to be as it is. Whatever way this moment manifests. And that's a beautiful way of changing the world.

Not that you ever think, okay, I'm now going to change the world through space. It doesn't happen like that. There's no intention behind it of me doing something to you.

That's not space. That's object consciousness. I will heal you.

Maybe it works, but it's object consciousness. If it works, it's a very limited healing. It's simply allowing this to be.

And then you become the bringer of space into that situation. And in that space, wonderful transformation happens. Healing also, whatever level it may be.

What a beautiful job for you, if you realize that your main function in this world is not what the little egoic me told you that your function is, whether it be president of the company, or whether it be the road sweeper. This is a temporary form. This is on the level of form you perform certain actions.

Temporarily. But deeper, your function is to be there as clear space in any situation. The space of awareness, the space of presence.

And then you, the situation is here, and you are no longer there as a reactive entity towards the situation. The little me is the reactive entity, the mind-made self, what Buddha calls the self, which is recognized as an illusion. That is not you.

So the illusion is recognized, where once was the self, there is an opening. There may be remnants of self along the borders of the opening, but there's the space. This is what

you bring into, even into nature.

There are levels you can bring that into nature, you can bring it into human interactions. When you bring it into nature, a wonderful thing happens when you perceive in and through the clear space of just awareness, looking at a tree, listening to a bird, looking at a flower, the forest. At that moment, the tree that you are looking at knows itself as it has never known itself before, through your awareness.

Because ultimately there's no separation between you and the tree. It only looks like that. So when you bring that awareness to anything you perceive, that which you perceive is no longer separate from you, and it recognizes itself, its own beauty, its own sacredness, through that aware perception.

So it's almost, one could say, a circle completes itself. And there's a line in the New Testament, which is that everything in nature, all creatures are waiting for humans to awaken. And you become the bringer of that, and nature then loves you.

So you can almost sense that the tree, the flower, want to get closer to you. That's perhaps what even Saint Francis did. We have pictures of Saint Francis.

They say this is a wrong interpretation. He was always close to, animals would always come to him. He had an enormous, it had been missing for a while in Christianity, the practice Christianity, but he brought in an enormous love for the created world.

Not the creature in itself, but he loved, he saw in every creature what he called the creator, which is the one life, the one consciousness. And so everything came to him. He always, you have pictures of him surrounded by birds.

The way they interpret it is saying he's preaching to the birds. He never preached to the birds. The birds don't need preaching to.

But he brought that presence, that complete openness. That was his whole life, was his whole life. I visited Assisi in the spring.

His whole life was an opening into space consciousness. We were sitting in the tomb where he's buried, which is an underground chamber. And continuously there's a stream of people.

They come in. Some kneel there or kiss the tomb and they walk around it. A continuous stream of people from all over the world come in the tomb of St. Francis. They walk around it. And I could feel it was, they're walking around an empty space. His very life was such denial of self that his very life became an opening of just space.

And it's almost like a black hole. His tomb is an opening. Similar scene we had.

We were in India earlier on the same trip. The tomb of Ramana Maharshi. The same

thing happens.

People come in every evening. They walk around it several times. They say it's great merit.

You get enlightened more quickly the more often you walk around. But again, it's left behind. It's not an entity.

It's an opening that they leave behind. They leave behind a space. That's the beauty and the sacredness of that.

So that is your destiny also. More and more to become that space. And you can still interact whatever you do.

So you go, nature is vital here. Bring that light. As you walk through nature, one step at a time, you're there as an aware presence.

As a spacious field of awareness. Innocent. There's an innocence in that looking.

Because everything you look on is fresh and new if you don't label it. One step at a time. And then you stop.

You look. Occasionally thoughts will come in and out, yes. It doesn't matter.

And then notice what I mentioned earlier. Every time your vision shifts to something else, there's a moment where there's very definitely no thought. As you explore visually that new object that arises.

That's beautiful. That moment. And when you become conscious of it, it may become longer.

The space of no thought gets longer. Then perhaps at some point the mind would say, oh you see, no thought. It doesn't matter.

That's okay. And then you just go back. Anybody who is a master at anything, whether it be a craftsman or an artist who has the ability to look in such a way at whatever they are working with in that clear space.

And then something that is more intelligent than you, deeper than you, the surface you, ultimately you, takes over. And it does it. It moves whatever it is.

The piece of wood or the stone or the canvas. The movement then, it comes out of that looking. Any mastery in which there's no thought, even if you're a writer.

Now you might think, well surely if I'm a writer, I need to think. Not really. I picked up a book.

Somebody wrote, I unfortunately don't remember the name. It was last week. I was visiting somebody and I picked up a book.

It was about how to write. And the writer had been trained in Zen. And I was amazed to read what her advice was.

Above all, don't think when you're sitting down. You must allow that suddenly, yes, suddenly a thought appears by itself. It comes at some point, yes, a thought arises.

But it doesn't arise through the process of thinking. What am I going to make happen here? What am I going to happen, make happen to this character?

What could I make happen? Let's see, I could do this. You can write in that way, but it won't be great.

Maybe many books are written in that way. Maybe that is the difference which nobody can explain between fiction and literature. There is a difference, but nobody can quite tell you.

And there are some books where you don't know. Is that just fiction or is it literature? With some you can clearly say, this is just fiction.

And there is a depth that is lacking when it's just fiction. It's a surface thing. Every character is a surface character, cardboard, one-dimensional, because it's all produced by the mind.

The deeper dimension is lacking. So when true writing happens, the writer enters that state of receptivity, awareness, no thinking. Then suddenly it comes.

Then at the last moment it becomes a thought, but that arises from the depth and then it goes onto the paper or the screen or whatever. There are many books about literature and what it means. Maybe nobody has discovered this yet.

If anybody is writing a book about literary criticism of literature, might be put that in. Any creative endeavor can only come from there. And a little by-product of that shift is that it frees you from suffering.

Oh me, my story is so unhappy. I suggest, so that we can truly be in that space, that between now and our next gathering, we keep noble silence, to use the words of the Buddha, to keep noble silence. And perhaps beyond that, we'll see.

At least for now, between here and this afternoon is the space of noble silence and there's simply always this. Just this is enough. This moment is enough.

Let this moment be enough, at least between now and this afternoon. You can bring back complexity later. For the time being, let this moment be enough.

And it always is this moment. This is enough. It's never complex.

Can't be. There's not enough room. This moment is not complex.

Complexity arises through leaving this moment. I'll use the bells. When you hear the bell, sound arises.

This is auditory perception. And then the sound reaches a point where it subsides, very slowly, because these are wonderful bells. So that sound takes a long time to die, but eventually it does, as every form does.

So the sound lingers a long time, and then follow that with your attention. A certain alertness is required to follow the sound with your attention. Follow it into death, where it's gone.

There also is a little opening into space consciousness. This is what they know when they play, I believe last year, maybe this year also, we will listen to the Japanese flute. When the tone of the shakuhachi bamboo flute merges with the silence, every time one note comes to an end, it takes you into that space where there's only what's left when the sound dies.

The sound was manifested. It dies into the unmanifested. What's left when the sound dies?

Just spacious awareness. Just consciousness is left with nothing in it. So you can follow, use the death of the sound, the birth and death of the sound, can take you there also through simply alert listening.

[Speaker 4] (2:14:50 - 2:14:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:11 - 2:15:20)

This concludes session two of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session three.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:46 - 3:27:20)

That forest trail that leads up to this building, that would be enough. All you need, walk it consciously four times a day. What else do you need?

Enough. Walking it consciously means one step at a time. Means perceiving without labeling beauty, even without labeling it beauty.

The depths, you're walking the depths in which the perception happens. And the step you're taking at this moment is not a means to an end. If you're walking along the forest

trail in order to get here, this could happen.

Every step that you take is a means to an end. And that's not conscious. The end is mind.

Mind projected future. I need to get there. So it could happen, especially if you're late.

Maybe hurrying. Maybe he started speaking already and I'm missing something important. But you're missing that step, which definitely is more important than what the speaker is saying at that moment.

The amazing thing is you can actually walk fast also. You're not reduced to walking slowly always now, to walk consciously. You could even hurry to get somewhere and you're really, maybe there is little time.

Maybe you need to catch a train or whatever it may be. And maybe you need to very quickly now, you have five minutes to pack your suitcase. And that can be very beautiful to still be present even when there's fast movement and enjoy every movement of that, the energy movement of it.

It's an energy dance. And there you are going through your drawers, picking this and that. And not even without, when you're present, thought is just an interference.

Because all you do in the state of presence is you see, you look. And in that perception, the looking reveals to you what is needed. Without going through the complicated and complicating process of thinking, certain things, yes, thought may be required, but you may be surprised for how many things.

Thought is actually more of a hindrance than a help. The ability to just look in that clarity of clear, the clear space of awareness, you look at any situation. In that looking, again, it's the same kind of looking that we are pointing to here when we speak of looking at a tree, looking at a flower.

But if there's pressure on you due to some external challenge, it could be something as simple as needing to get ready, it's late, or more of a pressure, some situation, then you may find that the alertness that is there as you look intensifies. So facing an imminent danger coming towards you, that looking would intensify. And out of that, action then comes.

So it could be a simple thing like needing to see what is it that I need to pack. I only have five minutes. And then you simply look, and you take what, you know beyond thought what is needed, and you take very effective way of handling things.

If you started to think, you would become stressed. I only have five minutes and I have to work out what I'm going to pack. And you're projecting yourself to the end of the five

minutes when you need to be ready.

It's so much pressure produced, but there's only this movement now. So any situation, clear looking at any situation that may appear complex, reveals to you what is needed. If anything is needed, if any action is needed, you will find yourself doing it, or you will find yourself not doing anything.

There are situations that are better left alone in one's life. And knowing what situation requires action, and what situation is better left alone, you could agonize over that if you start thinking for a long time. Should I or shouldn't I?

If I do, on the other hand, but so the ability to come to a situation and simply see, that is, there's a space of awareness. It is intelligence operating, but it is not intelligence as most humans know it. It is not the intelligence that does the crossword puzzles, the intelligence that is good at solving IQ tests, although it may come in even there, I don't know.

It hasn't in my case. It is an intelligence that works not analytically, it doesn't break things down into bits of information, because the human mind has certain similarities with a computer. It analyzes, breaks it down, the thinking mind.

But then there's another, there's a depth there also, there's a greater intelligence than the personal mind. And that is there when awareness arises and becomes part of the perception. That is silent intelligence operating, unconditioned consciousness operating in your life.

Things get much easier then. Needing to work things out, a lot of that falls away. So how it's so important, we started with such a simple thing like looking at a tree and allow the perception to arise in this place of awareness.

And then situations, you're not always in such peaceful surroundings as here. Some people would say it is easier to be present here, because you're not being challenged. That may be true for some, quite a few.

For others, it is true that they become more present when they are challenged. Some people are drawn into unconsciousness the moment the first challenge comes into their lives, which could be leaving here and stepping onto the ferry, or missing the ferry. And so they could be at this peaceful four days, five, whatever it is, here.

And suddenly a little thing goes not the way it's supposed to go, and the reactivity, it comes back, could do. Oh my God. Or it could be that the first challenge comes, whatever it may be, and you go, oh.

You recognize immediately the is-ness of that. It's the suchness of that, missed the ferry, and that moment is good. Your retreat can last a little longer.

Cooperate with the movement of life internally. Always. Great power lies in that.

Behind anything that goes wrong, if you cooperate with that movement that the mind calls wrong, cooperate internally with that movement that the mind has labeled bad, you can be sure that it turns around or something reveals itself that is of a greater good than the good that you seem to have lost in that situation that you call bad. There's always hiding something underneath that which the mind had labeled bad. When you continue to be trapped in that labeling mind, you don't even see that.

Most of the time it can then not reveal itself to you. You wouldn't even see it, because you've already decided that this situation is bad, and then the good that's hiding, more often than not, you would not even see. Or it cannot even come through.

So we are going back now to the forest trail, where it all starts, where you take one step at a time. There's such beauty in walking. Not surprisingly, Buddhists have developed walking meditation to simply bring awareness into something that otherwise would be reduced to something meaningless, a means to an end, automatic.

Anything you can bring awareness to that otherwise, that is often with you, or always with you, but usually you wouldn't even know it because it's always there, or it's usually an unconscious movement. And those are beautiful meditations. There's no real technique here.

You're simply bringing consciousness to what's already there. So I recommend for the rest of the time that particularly when you walk here, between your room and the beach, or on the beach, or between here, along the trail, to be conscious of walking, of each step. You don't need to change the way you walk.

When Buddhists learn walking meditation, it's fine. They do it their way. You do it very, kind of, every walk is a kind of very careful movement of the foot.

The heel goes down, the rest of the foot goes down, and the heel goes up, and then the foot lifts up. Let's keep it more simple. To simply watch, that's the way the walking that's taking place now.

The other one is fine too, but here let's just do the normal walk, and be conscious of each step, the simplicity of each step, and the beauty that's in there. Where does that beauty come from? Is it in that step?

Well, to some extent, but it really arises out of the awareness, that sense of aliveness, that sense of beingness, of presence that is there with every step. It's not the step in itself. It is because awareness arises, and the step happens within that spaciousness of awareness, and that awareness is beauty beyond form.

That awareness is sacred, and every step is sacred that you take. There is something

that you cannot describe that is there, and there is a quality in every step, an aliveness, and that's only walking. And of course, as you walk, you also perceive.

There's that, and you watch. It's the end of believing that all you are is a person, an exclusively personalized sense of self. A walking, to use the expression of that writer, one could almost say you're just a walking narrative story with your memories and thoughts.

Heavy. And so, you're walking as consciousness, a field of consciousness, perceiving you are a field of consciousness. It is a lessening, this is why we are here, as you spend time here, there's a lessening of the personal dimension of your life.

Not that you lose it completely. If you lost it completely all at once, it would be very disconcerting. So, that doesn't usually happen.

It's happened to some people, but probably not to you, and it's not necessary. There is a lessening of deriving your sense of self from your personal life, and having to carry that around with you and remember it all the time, me and my story. And it hasn't worked out yet, it hasn't quite completed yet, so there's the future constantly hanging over your head as a threat.

Oh God, what is going to happen to me? If you walk around like that, it's a burden just to be alive, and you can walk in the forest with a threat over your head of your future. Of course, it can come in when you fall back into mind.

You realize the future is uncertain. Oh my God, maybe I'm not going to get what I need to complete my life. Or maybe what I have now might be lost, and so on.

So, that exclusively personal me, this becomes transparent as awareness arises. And more and more, you go through life, and you go into situations, not just when everything is fine, you will find it arising, we may address that in more detail, arising also in when situations are difficult. And you may find that whereas before, any challenge or difficulty in your life, and the world is full of that, you go back into the world, and before you know it, it will face you in one day with five challenges, ten challenges, often in the form of people.

Occasionally, it's a missed ferry, but it's in the form of people more often than not, and the challenges come. And you may find what before you, the challenge pulled you back into reactivity, and the miracle is when a certain level of presence has been reached within yourself, there comes a point when it is less likely that a challenge will pull you back into unconscious reactivity. Then you complain, you are a personal self complaining that the world is not complying with your wants and desires, complaining in your head or out aloud, the world is not doing what you want it to do.

Basically, that's the challenges are, it's not going the way it's supposed to go. And so

there's the complaining, and that's the reactivity of the egoic sense of self, and fear. And when a certain level of presence has been reached, which may be the case with most of you, you will find a change happening, and that change is that the challenge could still pull you into, yes, occasionally it still pulls you into unconsciousness, but there's a different tendency now, and that is for the challenge to intensify the alertness that is that state of spacious presence, that is the non-reactive state. And so there, now there's the ability to look at the challenge or the situation in that clarity of awareness, and you have accessed an intelligence that is greater than the accumulated intelligence, and that intelligence is not confined to your head. That intelligence is connected to the totality, so it can even operate and seemingly come in as an external factor.

Once you have accessed it, it not just operates from within you, that intelligence, it also operates from without, and that often happens as just the right thing happening for that situation, such as is the case in synchronistic events and so on, or just simply at the right moment what is needed is suddenly, suddenly it appears, and sometimes almost it won't fall down from the sky, but it sometimes, you see, how could that have happened?

So just where did that come from? And the intelligence operates both ways. This is the beauty of that intelligence.

You have accessed the totality, you are no longer cutting yourself off by tying yourself into a little knot within the web of the whole, the little knot claiming an independent existence for itself, and it's called me. And the rest of the web of the interconnectedness of all things, that's the rest of the world, and it is threatening to the knot, but the knot has no independent existence. It's a good analogy to say a knot, because it is in the nature of a knot that it has no independent existence.

You can untie it. There never was a knot, not as a separate thing. So the, one could say the personal sense of self, the egoic sense of self, is a knot.

You tie yourself into a knot, and that is not a personal shortcoming of yours. It is a collective pattern in humanity to do that. The illusion of me, a separate me.

And so you can see how when you're as a knot, you're cut off. Things don't flow easily through a knot. When you tie a knot into a hose, not much water comes through, and the knot says, well, that's me, and I'm not going to change because I'm a knot.

I always say, no, that's why I'm a knot. It's true that the nature of knottiness, which that is a word, it comes from the continuous no to what is. And the untying of the knot comes with the yes to what is.

Then you're not a knot, but that means with the yes, the exclusively personal sense of self also dissolves. You can still operate as a person. That's okay.

And yet, increasingly, your sense of self is discovered, is realized to be consciousness,

the field of aware presence, the alertness that is here at this moment. As you sit there, there's a field of alertness that cannot really be defined in concrete terms because you would make it that which is beyond form into a mind form if you defined it. And that is such a relief, that shift from that little thing with its little problems, even though they may look big, they're all little.

It's such a shift from that to realizing that who you truly are is awareness, presence, that field. And that is the end of the little self, and the arising of the great self, or as the Buddhists prefer to say, no self. They'd like to put everything in negative terms, which is a good thing because then if you put it in negative terms, you can't form a concept out of it.

No self. At this moment, it's not something, I'm not pointing to anything that is, that cannot be within the realm of your experience at this moment. Now, when you are in that state of alertness, you don't remember your past.

If you want to, you can, but in that state of alertness, you don't need to remember your past. You don't even need to remember your name. Don't worry, you'll still know it when you need it.

But you don't need to, as you walk through the forest, you don't walk as John Smith, a nationality, a past, or whatever John Smith is doing with his life. You don't walk as that. And what would be lost at this moment, if you could not remember your name?

Would the sense of who you are be lost, the deepest sense? No, that's never lost. Just imagine for a moment, you have no name.

It's gone. This, and maybe even your whole story is gone. You can't remember anymore.

And yet there's an intense presence or aliveness here now. That's consciousness, awareness, space consciousness. That which you don't remember, briefly, is object consciousness.

It's still there if you need it, but it's not running your life. It's not burdening you, because object consciousness is heavy. You carry a lot around.

This is shift from personal to something greater. And then you live with one foot in one dimension, the other foot in the other dimension. And that's a beautiful way to live.

One foot in the unmanifested, spacious awareness. Awareness. That's the source, the ground of all being.

The other foot is in the world of manifestation, object consciousness, including thought, including emotions, sense perceptions, the entire world out here, which has a depth to it when you have one foot in the stillness, the spacious stillness of consciousness. Then

even the world of form has a depth and an aliveness, because you recognize in each form that you perceive, it could be here in nature, but also in other human beings, in each form you perceive, you recognize that which is beyond form as the essence of that form. And what is that?

Again, the unmanifested consciousness, pure, unconditioned consciousness, the essence of every life form, even what we call so-called inanimate life is not inanimate. There is an essence, a faint essence in all forms, even the stone. There's a rudimentary consciousness there.

The atoms are alive, very alive. If you looked at the atomic structure of a rock or a stone, you would find not only intense aliveness and movement, you would also find 99% empty space between the atoms. And it looked so heavy, that stone, from the level of our sense perception, that stone looked so heavy and dead.

But when you look at that stone, not labeling it, then you can sense the aliveness that is in that stone. There's an ancient scripture that was not Christian, that was not included in the New Testament, because they found it later, I believe, the Gospel of Thomas. And there Jesus says, he doesn't say, I'm the stone, but he said, lift up the stone and you will find me there.

Anywhere you will find me. And who is that? He speaks not as a personal me, he speaks as consciousness.

Consciousness speaks, and wherever you look, you will find me. And that is the meaning of loving, because that recognition of the essence of who you are, you have one foot in that, you're rooted in that, and then you interact and perceive the world. You interact with it, and you perceive it, and then you perceive, in Christian terms, you perceive, I believe it may have been Saint Francis who said it, the creator in the creature.

The creator is consciousness. And that is what is in every creature, but in every form that you see, there is an essence. And you sense that when you have one foot.

So, the universe is alive. It's alive, and you love it. You love it, because you recognize yourself in it.

Because ultimately, all love, it sounds a little strange to say that, all love is self-love. And that is fine, because ultimately, there's only oneself. So, you recognize the other, which to the personal sense of self is the other, the dreadful thing, the other, frightening that there are others in this universe.

I've quoted before Jean-Paul Sartre, hell is other people. I believe in the French, he said, the others, les autres, or something. And this is true from the point of view of the egoic mind.

Hell is other people, more often than not. And even those people who seem to give you heaven, more often than not, after a little while, it turns into hell. Well, you may remember your first marriage.

So, the heaven that is here, when you are not rooted in reality, which is what it is, the heaven always lets you down. Sometimes you think you found heaven here. And invariably, it lets you down.

The things, all things, all forms, anything in object consciousness will let you down. Because you have expectations that you place upon that they cannot possibly fulfill. But if you are rooted in the formless, then you don't place those expectations on the world of form.

Make me happy, complete me, give me what I need, complete my sense of self. You don't, they can't do that. Stay with me and don't leave me.

Nothing and nobody can do that. Forms come and go. And even if you have a wonderful marriage for 60 years, eventually one of you dies.

That's rare. I mean, a wonderful marriage for 60 years, but it can happen. So, these impossible expectations that you place on the world of form, then always leading to frustration with the world of form.

It is so frustrating to be alive in this world of form, if you only know that. Oh, for God's sake, when, it's always things leave me, go wrong, and I lose them, and nothing stays. And then the great things turn out not to be great.

What is this? And so, some people reach despair, even. I've seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and just striving after wind.

It's all, that's the Old Testament prophet translated into modern language. It's all so pointless. What's the point?

And so, then you could reach that state, which is a state of sarcasm and bitterness and resentment. It's life hasn't played its part, has treated you unfairly. You become a victim of the whole world.

Much more common than you may realize that deep-seated belief that the world has prevented me, if you're old enough, it has prevented me, it's too late now, has prevented me from being myself. Or the belief that the world is preventing me now from being myself. And everybody I meet is some kind of obstacle to being myself, although sometimes I think they're going to help me to be myself, and then they turn into obstacles.

It's a weird universe. When you are not rooted in that which is beyond, it's a very weird

place indeed. And beautifully, the weirdness of it all, expressed beautifully in certain works of art in the 20th century, like the novels of Franz Kafka, or the theater of the absurd, to see the absurdity of ordinary existence, it is absurd.

And so, and it could take you to despair. If you laugh about it, there's already some freedom, there's already something arising that doesn't identify with form. So humor is a good sign.

When humor comes in, you start laughing, which means there's some disidentity, and suddenly everything collapses around you, and you start laughing because it's all you can do. That means, and sometimes through laughter, that can arise, the disidentified consciousness, because you go, it's all gone. It's all gone.

It can be very liberating, but not everybody does that. Some weep and wail up to the very end, and die in the state of bitterness. Something went wrong somewhere.

And so, yes, to see the absurdity of it, the pointlessness of it, you can have all kinds of meaningful personal goals, what I am going to achieve, and when you achieve them, it's not, it won't be it. It won't feel that great, and then after a little while, it turns around into a burden more often than not. So there is a different way to live, and that is realizing that which is always here, has always been here, as the very essence of all life, and yet you overlooked it because all your attention was absorbed by object consciousness through thought processes, the things.

That's what we spoke of last night also. All your attention was totally absorbed by object consciousness. Running after this, running after that.

And so, space was always there. You just didn't notice it. That inner space can never be destroyed, even in the most, the person who thinks, my life cannot possibly be fixed anymore.

Maybe there are one or two people here who believe that or have believed it. My life cannot possibly be fixed anymore on whatever level. I've made a mess of it.

Such a mess. It's not unusual. And then to realize that it matters not at all, the space cannot be touched by whatever mess you make.

You can't destroy inner space. That space consciousness cannot. It's totally indestructible.

It's as indestructible as outer space. You can create any kind of havoc in this room. You can play heavy metal music for 24 hours.

At some point, it has to stop. And then the stillness and space are intact. Nothing happens to that.

And within you, that dimension remains. And this is why people who, you would say, have made a total mess of things, have created dreadful suffering for others and themselves, who ended up in prison because they murdered someone, a few of those realized space consciousness and realized what we could call an original innocence that is part of that, that is never touched by anything that ever happened to you or can ever happen to you or anything that you ever did to anybody. The original innocence is there even in a mass murderer. That remains.

There are heavy layers, dense layers of illusion, of mind, of pain body. Yes. But that, this is the beauty and the miracle that remains.

And it can be discovered no matter what your life situation is. That is grace. That is the redeeming factor.

Of life. And that possibility is always here. Some get there through suffering.

And some get there through sitting here. Or a combination. That's probably most true for most of you.

You're being worked on, on different levels. You're being worked on, yes. And the amazing thing is you may not immediately become free of all pain, even after this.

That's surprising. You may even find that there could be more pain suddenly. And that happens because it wants to be dissolved.

It needs to be dissolved. You haven't got lifetimes anymore in which to work out your karma. As presence arises, you may find your pain body also comes up at times very strongly.

It comes up into the light of consciousness because it needs to be transmuted for the shift in consciousness to happen. And there isn't that much time on the planet, which is great. It is a good thing that humanity as a whole is running out of time.

That's great. That's great for any human being. It's great on a personal level.

Imminent death, running out of time, looks dreadful from the point of view of the personal self, but is actually wonderful. And some people have realized it. I have known people who ran out of time, and it happened.

Enormous transformation happened. An incredible flowering happened. So we are running out of time, and that is good.

The transmutation needs to happen quickly. So as presence arises, the old accumulated pain can also come up more strongly in waves. So you have spaces of pure presence, beautiful spaces, and then suddenly the wave movement comes.

The pain body comes up very, very strongly. And the mind says, I've lost it. It's all gone.

It's all... And then it says it was all delusion anyway, because the only reality is pain. It will tell you, you lived in some kind of dream world with these silly retreats.

This is real. You've been... You've been fooling yourself.

Now I know what's real. This is it. And the pain, of course, the pain body, it comes up.

The old tendency is for the pain body to want to feed. But as it comes into the arising presence, it may not be that easy for the pain body. Yes, it comes up strongly, but it becomes more difficult for the pain body to renew itself through you, because for that it requires your unconscious cooperation.

And your unconscious cooperation is to start thinking along the lines of the energy field of the pain body. In other words, the pain body then occupies your mind, controls your thought processes, and feeds on your thought processes. They all reflect the energy of the pain body.

It feeds on. That's the old way. And that's how karma renews itself.

And you probably would never get out of it, because karma is a cycle. It's a circle. It's a cycle.

It goes on and on. It's only through the arising presence that it can stop. So the pain is still there, but it is met with presence.

Not even all the time. At times, it still uses your mind. At times, it still feeds on your thinking.

At times, it still feeds on your partner's reactions, or your family's reactions. It feeds on that. At times, the old process still works for the pain body.

And at other times, you can be there and watch it. And those are the important times you bring some acceptance to the pain that you feel. It's not translated into a story in the head.

Your unhappy life story. Or the story of what others did to you. Of what others, how others made you into a victim and have caused you this pain that you now feel.

Others could be, you see, others again. Others, other people, caused you this, what you feel now. This is not true.

They may have been the trigger for it. But what you feel now is humanity's pain. It's old.

It goes back a long time. Or you may be blaming a situation. You may be blaming a person or a group of people.

Or you may be blaming a situation as those who have, you did it to me. And this becomes part of the story. This is a narrative in the mind that you totally believe in.

And that explains why you feel the way you feel and projects it outward. The source of the pain is out there in that situation and in those people who are doing that to me. And that's the story, that is the narrative that you totally believe in, that is running through your mind.

With all kinds of associated thought processes, all connected to the central belief is that the world caused you this pain, did that to you. And so you're feeding the pain body. It becomes a story.

It becomes an unhappy entity, an unhappy person, an unhappy me, a heavy and unhappy entity, psychically heavy. Oh, that's the pain body. Or it is met, and this happens more and more now.

Yes, it will come up strongly and it is met with awareness and acceptance as an energy field of pain that you feel at this moment. You are not running away from it. You say yes to it because you cannot deny that it is here now.

You don't attach a story to it. It's enough. What you feel is enough.

This is what you feel at this moment. This is, oh, all it is, it's an energy movement, contracted energy, explosive energy. The yes becomes almost a welcoming of it because it is part of the isness of what is now.

With which you are cooperating, which you are not denying. And that's a strange thing. One could almost say you embrace suffering at that moment, but without making it into a mental story.

And this is why we could call that to suffer. I believe the expression was first created by Gurdjieff, to suffer consciously. And that's an enormous thing happens when you suffer consciously.

It does not mean you make it into a story. It means to directly feel, sense and accept that suffering. It's not really suffering anymore.

It's just pain. Suffering requires an entity that says, I am the unhappy me and the world did something to me. Just that.

And that, bringing that acceptance to it, then the old pain becomes like a fire. It burns up the ego, the mind structure that we call the egoic entity. It burns it up.

This can even happen, it happened to some people who became very ill and then simply accepted, did not accept their illness. That's not acceptance. Acceptance is illness because illness is a mental concept.

All that there is, is the condition of this moment. What I feel at this moment, the condition of the body at this moment. Illness means there's a past to it, a probable future to it, a probable outcome.

Illness is a heavy mental concept. It's a belief structure that can become very deeply, it's a universal belief structure. So all, this is not what you accept when you accept illness.

When illness can become that fire, what you accept is the condition of this moment, which could be pain, physical pain. And that also is a fire. If you surrender, who is saying it's easy?

I'm not saying it's easy. The act of surrender may not be easy. Once you've surrendered, it's easy.

The transition from non-surrender to surrender is quite something. I'm not going to surrender. The condition of this moment could be physical pain, it could be weakness, it could be a disability in the physical body, a loss of movement, whatever it may be.

And there's simply acceptance of what is at this moment, only at this moment, this you say yes to. And I've met quite a few people whose main teacher, that which transformed their consciousness, was an illness. That's one way in which pain can manifest.

Although when we speak of pain body, we speak mainly of emotional pain, but emotional pain and physical pain are also closely linked. So there's the surrender to the pain that you feel, without feeding it, without feeding it. Then the pain becomes a fire that burns up the ego, the me.

And that's a beautiful thing. And then the energy that was trapped in that pain, the field of emotional pain, becomes transmuted into presence. And this is why some of the people who have broken through to that level of consciousness, that is the destiny of all humans, most of them broke through intense suffering.

It happened through intense suffering. It happened through the night of the soul, for many. This is no longer an absolute requirement now, because humanity is reaching a different level of evolution.

The night of the soul is still one way that works. If Hollyhock doesn't work, the night of the soul will work. But some of you may already have had the night of the soul, and you don't need another one.

And all that happens here at Hollyhock is a deepening of that which has already happened. Just that, that's all you need. So you've already had the night of the soul.

So please, I can hear a few minds saying, oh my god, I haven't had my night of the soul yet. You may not need it. Not any...

in the past I would have said, wait, it will come. But there is such intensity to the arising consciousness now, that not everybody needs that anymore. The suffering that you have had, which undoubtedly you have, otherwise you wouldn't be here, the suffering that you have had is probably enough.

It's taken you here. It's taken you to the possibility of voluntarily stepping out of the old consciousness. Voluntarily embracing that which is beyond object consciousness, the inner space, step out of that, of a million years of conditioning.

And so it worked. It brought you here. All the suffering which the mind says, all that was so senseless all my life hasn't...

Why did I make so many mistakes that created so much suffering? Why couldn't I realize this earlier? Well, you couldn't.

You didn't. Otherwise you would have. The suffering was needed, but it may not be needed anymore.

I'm not saying that pain will not come, but suffering as an entity that says, I am the unhappy one and you did it to me, that does not need to come back. The pain that is left is beautiful. You can welcome it as the fire of transmutation.

Beautiful. Conscious acceptance of pain is a very quick transmutation that happens. Sometimes you can experience, when you really accept emotional pain that arises, pain body, and there's full acceptance, it can sometimes happen that you experience in one moment how that pain shifts into intense aliveness.

And that means a big chunk of pain body has just been transmuted, so to speak. It could happen even with, let's say, one way in which the pain body manifests is anger in some people. It can be other manifestations too.

That fire, this intense energy in anger. Now usually it is linked to the mind, it's projected outward and says, you did something to me. Then suffering doesn't help you.

It renews itself. But if you can stay with the fire of the anger and totally accept that intense energy that is running through you, anger is very close to fire, and then you may suddenly find a shift in one moment from anger into incredible aliveness and presence. It's turned around, it's been freed, the trapped energy has been freed and transmuted simply through complete acceptance.

And that is the beauty even of the pain that you still carry inside. Even that has a beauty and has its place. And when you see that, all that remains is gratitude.

Even for that which before you would have condemned and rejected. That's the beauty of transformation, the transformation that's happening now. You can, I'm not suggesting,

or maybe I shouldn't say that, but Marina last year, or the year before, who was here from Italy, she would swim every day.

It was quite cold, probably colder than it is now. And I asked, oh, is the water cold? She said, no, because I didn't have any labels in my mind for it.

It wasn't, I didn't call it cold. I just went in. There was nothing, the mind was still and didn't say it's really cold.

There was just total acceptance of this. It wasn't cold anymore because cold is a thought. And she went in and she said she felt it wasn't cold at all.

It was enormously, it felt so alive. What before was cold felt enormously alive. So I'm not suggesting that you should do that, but any discomfort that you endure and completely accept can give you a little taste of what that means.

The simple observing of a craving, this is very similar to conscious suffering, because a craving that is not met is suffering. So if you have a craving, whatever it may be, big or small, for ice cream or chocolate or coffee or a cigarette or something heavier, if you have a craving, just to sit with it as a little experiment, accept that feeling of whatever that is. Craving is a strange thing.

It has a strange feel to it. It's a form of suffering, yes. To simply allow that to be there for a while without acting upon it.

And that is not called repression. It is not, it could be mistaken for repression, but repression is very different. Repression is, says, I will not have a cup of coffee.

And with that comes a contraction and there's willpower involved. I will not move from here. And something in you wants the coffee.

Allow it to be. Then suddenly there is a spaciousness around it. And that also is a nice way, just a little experiment with craving.

It's not really important whether a little bit later you do it or you don't. It doesn't matter. But that was an experiment in consciousness.

Just stay with that. That's beautiful. But the essence of what we are speaking of then is the acceptance of pain.

The end of suffering is the acceptance of pain. Suffering requires an entity, a me. Consciously embrace pain, really.

That's what it is. Although Gurdjieff called it suffering. It's just a question of how people use words.

Conscious suffering, conscious pain. Beautiful shift happens then. And so if there's still pain in you, use it in that way as a fire.

I suggest that we keep noble silence for a little longer. It is good to keep noble silence. It's the Buddhist expression, noble silence.

Why noble silence? Why not just silence? Well, keeping silence means not speaking.

Keeping noble silence is not speaking and being aware. There's the added dimension of awareness that makes the silence noble. Anybody can be silent.

There are some monasteries that are mostly silent, but they haven't looked within and they're all fuming. And they hate each other. Not all, some, some.

So noble silence is awareness. And please use for your consciousness practice, awareness practice, the beautiful trail between here and the main building. Walk on it.

It's a kind of sacred walk as you walk in silence, one step at a time, in that immense incomprehensible mystery that is nature. So let's keep noble silence for the rest of the day. Just sit in the stillness for a little until you find yourself getting up.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:27:42 - 3:27:51)

This concludes session three of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session four.

[Speaker 1] (3:28:19 - 4:43:44)

Somebody gave me this morning, I don't know if I put it in my pocket, a calendar leaf from today. It's by Ernest Hemingway. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of our lives, nor from now on, but there's only now, why then now is the thing to praise?

And I'm very happy with it. Maybe he forgot that later. It's easy to forget that there's only now.

Not a personal fault of yours, if you forget. It's the human mind. And ultimately there's nothing personal in it.

It's the human mind. And when you forget, something else takes over, obscures the aliveness, intelligence, the joy that is inherent in now and in life, which are one. Then your life situation becomes more important than now.

Assumes an importance that ultimately it doesn't really have. And the life situation exists within the polarities of high, low, good, bad. And its characteristic is also that it's

incomplete.

Something needs to happen before I can be myself, is the belief. And when you suffer, that's a good indication that you've lost the now, so to speak. You can't really lose it.

But it can be lost to you. It's still there. You don't know it.

And the deep meaning of now is one with what we sometimes call presence, or what we sometimes call space consciousness. Because the now is deeper than what happens in it. And the now is not separate from who you are.

The one factor that remains the same throughout your life. It's now. And so the ability is there in you now to step out of the stream of mind.

That's your life situation, what I sometimes call object consciousness, the story, the narrative, which is problematic. There's probably not a single person in this room whose life situation is not to some extent problematic. And if isn't problematic today, wait until next week.

You may have a little interlude of, life is leaving me alone for a moment. And that is fine. It's in the nature of phenomenal reality to be like that.

Atoms coming together, colliding, coming apart, the dance of form. It's only problematic from a personal sense of self, from perspective of a personal sense of self. And your whole personal sense of self is bound up with problems and things to be worked out.

Need to think about this. It's so easy, as it probably happened to Hemingway, to see the truth, to have limited access perhaps to the dimension of space consciousness. Hemingway was a creative writer.

So within that field, he had access to that. And he had insights. And then it's easy to lose that.

And your entire attention becomes absorbed again by object consciousness, the story. So here, presence arises from within you. It's being pulled out of you, as you sit there.

It responds to something that it recognizes here, which is itself, that essential consciousness where we are all one. The unconditioned recognizes itself. And that feels good.

It likes that. It comes forward. And you're now able to step out of the stream of mind in your everyday life.

The moment you notice that suffering or unhappiness have taken over, or fear or stress, all forms of suffering. That little ability to step back into that space now. That space of now.

The moment you notice you've gone away. And you will go, of course. You will go astray.

Sometimes for a few hours. You could even go away for a few days. Unlikely, though, anymore.

It could happen. And it's always waking up the qualitative difference of being present, compared to being immersed in compulsive thinking, is enormous. It is like waking up out of a dream.

That's the dream of thought. And that is a wonderful thing, to discover that possibility in your life, to step out of that dream and awaken. Perhaps, probably now, without the need for some challenge.

Because that can be very helpful, too, to wake you up, when you've been drifting along. And suddenly, something happens. Life presents you with a big challenge.

Space consciousness is back as the alert, aware field of presence. And that is the determining factor in any human relationship. Whether space consciousness is still present.

Whether there is space in the relationship. Whether there is space in you, in the relationship. Or whether you are absorbed totally in object consciousness.

And that's any kind of relationship. The question is, are you there as space? Is there a depth, a space, from where you relate?

It begins with the ability to listen to the other person. That is very closely related to being present. To listen in that alertness.

No matter what words are coming out of the other person's mouth. And whether it's in business relationship, or whether it is in your personal relationship, or whether it's in a relationship that is very fleeting. Very short encounters in an elevator.

Maybe just a few words are spoken in a shop, in a restaurant with a waiter. And it all comes down to a moment of no thought. Just alert, spacious presence.

With your partner, listening to him or her. Somebody who comes to you with, in an agitated state, totally absorbed by some life situation. And the world will draw you in, want to draw you in, to complete identification again with things.

You remember we mentioned the word things. Meaning not just physical things, but including physical things. Some people's attention is totally into physical things.

Their belongings, their house, their car, their dog, their... That pull is very strong. And that's the challenge.

The world wants to, and the world is ultimately the human mind, becomes externalized as the world out there, wants to draw you back into total identification with object consciousness, objects. This matters. This matters.

This is so important. And I'm always amazed what kind of things people make important in their lives. How ultimately insignificant the things are that they make important, more important than their state of consciousness.

They're more important than peace, more important. The tiniest things can assume an importance that you give the power away to things. You give them the power to make you unhappy.

And what kind of things people give that power to is just amazing. Ephemeral, fleeting things and situations that are here one day, gone the next. Things that would pop even if you discovered you had a serious illness, or you have an accident, which sometimes can be a great awakening.

Things that would pop like a soap bubble and their unimportance would be revealed if somebody told you you have a serious illness and you had to be concerned with all that. Suddenly, it has no significance whatsoever. The heavy problems that you had been carrying around, dissolved at once.

This is why for some people a serious illness is the great awakening. Out of total immersion in object consciousness, there is no guarantee that the illness will awaken you, because it could add a further heavy object to your mind. The concept of me being seriously ill, which would add a further heavy thought form to identify with to your mind.

That is possible too. But potentially, an illness has the ability to awaken you and to reveal to you that which is at best relatively important. And the truth is, anything in this world of form, of things, is relatively important.

And your career, your possessions, your relationships, what you have achieved or not achieved, what you know or you don't know, things that people derive their self, sense of self from, all relatively important. Yes, it's relatively important whether I live in the street, sleep on park benches, or I have a nice home. Yes, it makes a difference in the realm of relativity.

But you can be awake on the park bench as you can be awake in a nice home. And some people awakened precisely there, after losing things, things to identify with. So there's only one thing that matters absolutely in one's life.

Then the rest of your life is recognized as relative. It's not that you ignore it, but you recognize that the importance is only relative. And the one thing that matters, and Jesus used those words too, there's only one thing that matters, he said to Martha, in the story of Mary and Martha, two women or two sisters, he's visiting and one is extremely busy,

get this done and that done, we have to get the meal ready, look who's here, he's visiting us, he's come and help me get the meal, this needs to be done, peel the potatoes, do this. And Mary wasn't doing anything, she was just sitting there looking at Jesus. And Martha says, why don't you tell her to help me?

And Jesus wasn't really concerned whether the food would be on the table or whether it would be on the table. He said, Mary, there's only one thing that really matters. This is a free translation.

And Mary has chosen that one thing that really matters. Now when you look, modern theologians, they can't tolerate that statement, and they do whatever they can to reinterpret that. He didn't really mean that.

Another simple way of putting it is you forget that the only thing that really matters is your state of consciousness, nothing else. If that's not right, nothing out there is going to be right. And you're not going to be of much help to anybody.

To see what is primary, that is not selfish, far beyond it, it's the opposite of selfish, to recognize that. And then, what is so important to have the power to make me unhappy? The Course in Miracles puts it this way, in any situation, it says, ask yourself what your purpose is in this situation.

What is really my purpose in this situation? The mind will tell you, well, I need to get this and achieve that out of it, and I need to keep hold of this, or not lose that, or get that. Often it's I want something, and the world wants something else.

The source of great suffering. I want something, but the world, in whatever form the world comes, wants something else. What is really my purpose in this situation?

And the Course in Miracles puts it this way, it's peace is my purpose in this situation. And one of its lessons is, I could see peace instead of this. I could see peace instead of what I now see in this situation.

But how? How could I see peace in what looks like a conflict situation? You step back from object consciousness, and you do it.

There are different ways in which you can step back from object consciousness. The moment you notice that object consciousness is creating suffering, because you've become totally drawn into it, have lost your rootedness in the unmanifested. So you're drawn into just, in the manifested.

There are little ways, and you know them, but I'm saying it again, of stepping back out of complete identification with object consciousness. And one of the ways is the yes to what is. The inner yes to this moment.

And that is surprising, that that is a way of stepping out of object consciousness. So you step out of object consciousness by allowing the objects that are here, manifested in this moment, to be there as they are. And often the way in which the objects that are the manifestation of this moment, very often, the particular configuration of objects that make up the external form of this moment, may not be what your mind wanted.

What your mind would have said, this is how I wanted this moment to be. More often than not, it's something else. So, but you cannot find peace or yourself by working exclusively on that level of object consciousness, and trying to rearrange the configuration of objects in my life, in such a way that it all fits neatly together, and then the life picture, the life situation suddenly is complete and works beautifully.

And then I can be at peace. This is the attempt that people make, when they try to, it's not, it never stays for very long, it's not in the nature of phenomenal reality to do that. Things continuously move and are in flux, and any situation you go into, no matter how wonderful, there's always another side to it.

It's the entire, the whole phenomenal existence would not exist without the pull of the polarities. Hot, cold. High, low.

Birth, death. So there's the, there's a futile attempt to rearrange, not that you cannot honor that dimension of your life, and do the best you can on the level of things. Yes, you do the best you can on the level of things, but if that's all there is, no matter how you try to do the best you can, it will never be good enough.

Because you haven't left the level of object consciousness, you're only there. And so, there are people who try so hard, and then always, that wasn't supposed to happen. There are people, they're wonderful people, who perhaps do dedicate their whole lives to helping others, perhaps as social workers, or go to third world countries.

It's beautiful, but many of them, after a few years, experience burnout. They get depleted, because there's so much suffering, and there seems to be no end to it. And then, of course there is.

They exclusively operate on the level of object consciousness, and it can happen to easily, very easily, you can be drawn into that. So, the key then, is finding the one, that dimension of space that is beyond the polarities that are here in object consciousness. Not expecting the polarities of object consciousness not to be there, or hoping that one day it'll all be fine.

This can happen, it can all be fine, but not in the way that the mind thought it could be fine. It can be fine at this moment. It is already fine at this moment, but you don't know that.

All the allowing the particular configuration of objects in your life to be as they are, even

if it looks problematic, and it usually does, allowing this moment to be as it is. That allowing takes back your identification with object consciousness. It's a stepping, allowing is a stepping back.

And when you step back, a space opens up around the particular events, situation of this moment, the particular configuration of how things are at this moment. There's a space around it. It's a stepping back.

At this moment, there may be screaming human being in front of you, accusing you, you did that. The unconscious impulse is to say, how dare you say that I did that? There's an acceptance of, suddenly there's a space around the turbulence.

And that at first, it's a very subtle thing, the space around the turbulence. And then you realize how deep it is. And then you could be in the middle of great external turbulence in your life, even tragic events at this moment, even in the face of death, and through inner alignment with the suchness of this moment, allowing the forms to be as they are, go beyond form, go beyond identification with form.

It's through allowing forms that the deeper dimension is there. And then you're free of dependence on the world of form, as far as your inner state is concerned. You can still experience on a surface level, which is a wave movement, you can still experience happiness and unhappiness, but they are minor movements on the surface of your being.

I compare this to lighting a candle in a dark room. The candle is lit. And then suddenly, the candle is extinguished.

That makes a big difference if you sit in a dark room, whether the candle is lit, or whether the candle is extinguished. But now open the shutters, the windows, and sunlight is streaming into the room from all sides. And there's the candle, and sometimes the candle is lit, and sometimes it's not lit.

Happiness, unhappiness. It's lit? Oh, nice.

It's not lit. Hmm. Oh, oh.

Oh. But there's the sunlight is filling the room, so it doesn't matter that much. Only if in the absence of that, then your life situation matters absolutely, and it'll make you happy one day, in this strange, this ecstatic happiness sometimes.

It's all worked out for me, finally. Or sometimes people, the gestures they make when they've made it, they go, oh yeah, I've made it. It's almost the ego saying, I've triumphed over the universe.

Thank you. I saw it on TV. And then a week later, they go, they don't win the match.

Oh, you're at the mercy of the wind, the wind of phenomena. And so, this is a stepping back. So the one, perhaps the easiest, the most simple thing is to remember the yes, the possibility of the yes to this moment.

That takes you out of the story into now. The Course in Miracles puts it this way, you single out this instant. You take just that, because that is ultimately your life.

This is not the depth of, it is the form it takes is the external manifestation of your life at this moment. The depth of now is your life, is life. You single out this instant and recognize it as timeless.

And you stay with this instant only, particularly when things get heavy in your life situation. It is a signal to step back into the alertness of now, of presence, of space consciousness. And if your life situation is very heavy, it could be, let's say, you're faced with an illness which may or may not bring about an early end to your physical existence.

You may be faced with that. That immediately erases all other problems that you thought you have and reveals them as fairly insignificant. But it's possible that you still recognize that, see that as a problem, which it isn't.

It can push you into intense alert presence. Only this moment exists. One can live in such a way that the life situation never again takes you over completely.

Another way is, surprisingly, bring your attention back to sense perceptions. Because sense perception can help you to connect with now. And you will notice when you are not connected with now, you're hardly aware of your surroundings.

Your entire attention is in thought processes. And then you can bring attention back to, you suddenly look around. This isn't so bad.

This moment isn't so bad. My life situation may be dreadful. But if I single out this moment, that's not so bad.

I'm sitting somewhere breathing and there's a wall there, another one there, and a window with blinds on, and a little bit of sky. And you look around and then there's little graffiti on the walls. And suddenly in that alertness, there is more there than that which you see, although the perceptions brought you to it.

They were the beginning. Those pain perceptions were there suddenly. But you also realize an intense aliveness underlying your sense perceptions.

An intense alertness underlying your sense perceptions. A spaciousness underlying those forms that you see, which are limited forms. And limiting forms, limiting you perhaps.

And yet it doesn't matter when you discover the depth that is within you in any situation.

But first you need to come into now. And then now reveals its depth to you, how deep now actually is.

And if you go deep into now, there is peace there. There is even joy there. That doesn't depend on the ups and downs of object consciousness.

The joy is the sunlight that is there. The ups and downs of object consciousness are the flame of the candle. Sometimes it's lit, sometimes it's not lit.

This is how it is. Sense perceptions. This is why we placed importance here on perceiving.

And the amazing thing is, you perceive without trying to fit the sense perceptions into your narrative. If you're sitting in that little room with barred windows, and if you looked around, you would be relating your sense perceptions to the narrative in your mind, the story of me. This is what the world has done to me.

They have put me here. Even when I was a child, the world was unfair to me. And they treated me badly.

And now they have put me here. They did that to me. This is where I've ended up.

And all the details of my story, every sense perception, you would try to fit into the story of me. It's an unhappy story, in that case and in many other cases. It's an unhappy story.

And even if it's a happy story, you're sitting in a limo, a chauffeur-driven limo. It picked you up from the airport. And you can tell yourself a story there, too.

And that looks like a happy story. You see the drinks there that are arranged. You can take any bottle.

You can air-conditioned. Everything is... And you say, I made it.

You have another story. And again, stories have the tendency of being satisfying for a while and then changing or no longer working to satisfy you. The next time you could be sitting in the limo feeling, how empty that is to be sitting.

It's no longer fulfilling to my story. After a while, it's normal. And you need something else.

And this isn't doing it anymore. Or you might even do the opposite. Why am I sitting in this limo when everybody else is so poor?

I shouldn't be here. Again, some new story develops. And you suddenly feel guilty about sitting in this limo.

Another story, they change. Let's go back to the man sitting in a little room with barred

windows, who is then attempting to fit the sense perceptions into the story. And that's, of course, not presence.

It's to stay with the perceptions without the story in that alertness. There's just this. And it's enough without the projection of your personal self onto them.

Because when you project, you have a personal and unhappy relationship with the prison cell that you're sitting in. If you have a personal relationship with the prison cell, it's a very unhappy place. Or whatever place.

But if you can take the story out of this moment and just be with the simplicity of this moment, even the wall of the prison cell has an aliveness and a beauty to it. And you see it directly without needing thought processes to convince yourself that it has an aliveness and a beauty to it. You see it directly.

And people have gone through that transformation in prison cells. I'm using that as an example of what would usually be called an extremely undesirable life situation. But you can take any situation.

Are you completely in the story as you're going from A to B? Or are you present to your sense perceptions? And by being present to your sense perceptions, the sense perceptions too, auditory, visual, become a portal into something that is deeper than the perceptions.

When the alertness arises towards sense perception, then that alertness reveals itself as very deep. And that takes you out of the story, which has a past and a future. Heavy past and future.

So, you discover the beauty of living to a large extent, if not a hundred percent. If you only live 50 percent free of the story. Or less.

Fifty percent of your life, 30 percent. You live while you go from here to there, while you sit at home, while you wait for something to happen. Stepping out of the story and just be with this moment.

And discover the depth of this moment, the aliveness of this moment, both within and without. And the beauty of this moment. This could happen while you're seriously ill and might be waiting in a hospital room for treatment.

And you become totally and utterly present. And there's a little potted plant with leaves, intensely alive, which you see when you don't bring in mental labels. Which you see without the personal relationship, just that.

And in that alertness, there is also a stillness. When the story isn't running through your mind, that dimension that is space and stillness is suddenly there. That frees you from

you as the story-based sense of self.

So, you can step out of it by using, one could say, various exit points. It's a good thing that within your life situation, the dream that is ultimately your life situation, as Shakespeare said, we are such stuff as dreams are made of. Here one day, on the next fleeting events.

Within the dream of your life situation, if you look here and there, you find little doors that say exit. And you are more likely to look for them when you get unhappy within your life situation than when you're happy. But that changes quickly anyway.

The unhappiness comes after an interlude of happiness. Suddenly the candle isn't lit anymore. And then you start looking.

You can start looking for the exit signs. Wouldn't that be wonderful? In a nightmare, if you remember that in that nightmare, all you have to do is look for the little luminous sign that says exit.

And you find one sign is the exit that says sense perception exit. Another sign is the exit written underneath. It says yes.

And then another sign is there's an exit where it says inner body. You can take any. And if you go, it doesn't matter which exit you go through, you end up in the same place.

Another exit that's not yet available for everybody, but for some, for some of you that is already there. For some it's not yet there, but that's okay. That exit says stop thinking.

Just that. Stop thinking. When you discover that, but you discover it through, first you use the other exits, but then you discover within yourself you can actually choose to simply be present with what is without the interference of thought.

You choose presence. You choose to not think. The whole dream has come to a stop.

And the strange thing is, no matter what exit you use, through it you access that which is beyond the phenomenal. And miraculously, it influences the fact that you are rooted in the unmanifested with one foot in it miraculously influences the way in which the manifested unfolds for you. That is to say, the way in which what you call your reality, your life, your world, the way in which you experience life on an external level changes, is influenced strongly by the fact that you are rooted in the depths of your being, in the spaciousness of presence and the stillness of presence.

That does something. It's not that the two realms are totally separate. They are not.

Something from the unmanifested flows, and this may sound paradoxical, but that's how it is. It's when we use language it begins to sound paradoxical. Something from the unmanifested flows into the world of manifestation and makes it more benevolent.

The way in which it unfolds has a benevolence, it is more benign. Yes, there are still polarities, but what is lost is the harshness and the violence that otherwise is inherent in the polarities. And so the phenomenal then unfolds with more gentleness.

And yes, this is the only way in which what that really means. Love flows from that dimension into the world of form, because love is never derived from anything in the world of form. It doesn't come out of form.

It comes from the formless. And so that's the only way in which love can come into your true love. And that true love is to look upon anything without thought is the flow of love.

The yes to what is, is love. Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, has a book out, it's called Loving What Is. A yes to what is.

But the love, people are looking for love or try to be loving, never having gone beyond object consciousness. And they have an object in their mind, which is a me, which is, I need to be more loving. And they try hard.

It doesn't work. I've tried so hard to love, but he let me down. Now, letting down is an interesting expression.

And it can be applied to anything in the world of object consciousness. The belief system, for a while, it's great. It's your support in life.

It's all, I believe this is how it is. And suddenly something happens and you can't explain anymore why this should happen to you, because you believed all the right things. Thought structures let you down in the end.

Things let you down because they don't give you the satisfaction that you thought they would give for a while. And then they let you down. Situations that you go into that were great, one moment great, and then it let me down.

I became the CEO and then you get so stressed that you need hospital treatment. The situation let you down. You were looking for something better in it.

And people, he let me down, she let me down, everything. It's in the nature of things to let you down, because letting you down means you had an expectation that they can't fulfill in the world of form. You wanted something from the world of form that is only in the formless.

You wanted something through future in the world of form, which is already here now. Places too. You can look at the most ideal place and then you buy some land there and you build a house there and at first it feels great.

And then as you sit in that house, it wears off after a while. The beautiful view from the window is still beautiful, but it wears off. It's not that fulfilling inside after a while, if you

operate within object consciousness.

So, even the most beautiful place will have certain drawbacks also, that you only discover when you move there. Now, this does not happen if you stay with what is, because there's a freshness to every moment. But it happens when you are immersed in a story-based sense of self.

So, it's stepping out of that, use the exit. If you can, and some of you can, the exit I just mentioned, stop thinking is one that is available to some of you already. Presence arises with such intensity that thought doesn't come in anymore, except a few little fragments here and there.

So, I probably mentioned to you before, somebody asked me once what my main achievement in life was. I hadn't written the book yet, so there was nothing much for many years on an external level. And so, I said, I don't need to think anymore.

The compulsion to think is gone. That's all. Now, the world doesn't value that too much, but that's okay.

If I went to an enlightened employer and said that, he or she would give me the job, because they would know how well you function in that state where you don't have to think. Can think, don't have to, and then a greater intelligence operates. That is the intelligence that is deeper or higher, whatever perspective you want to use, than thinking.

Not separate from it. Thinking is an aspect of universal intelligence that operates through humans. One could say that the intelligence that operates throughout the universe, when it gets filtered through the brain, or focused through the brain, becomes thought.

One way of putting it. So, in humans, there's a tendency of that intelligence to become expressed as thought. But humans also have the ability to transcend thought.

And that's an evolutionary transition, if not to say leap, for humanity. Humanity has been thought-based probably for a million years. And now that cycle is coming to an end because it's becoming self-destructive.

All cycles come to an end. It's an evolutionary cycle. Our gathering is part of that evolutionary impulse that is now in many humans, to go beyond that limited consciousness that is identification with mind as a me.

That limited sense of self. And that evolutionary impulse is in many human beings. And there are many who don't allow that yet, because the old structures are still very dense.

So, there is an enormous push, one could almost say, within them towards

transformation. And yet, there's a refusal to let go of the old structures, which is the old structures themselves hanging in there. And so then, it often is the case that humans need to experience some disaster so that the structures break open.

That's the grace of disaster. If it breaks open, heavy mind structures, the shell is cracked open. So there's grace.

Look at it from a deeper level. There is grace in every disaster. From a limited point of view, you can't see that.

That's the beauty of it. Divine grace is there also. And those who are open to that evolutionary impulse, as you are, don't really need the disaster anymore.

That's good. Or you may need a final little disaster as the final push out of identification with mind. Maybe a little disaster will be enough.

A beautiful saying of Jesus, take no thought for the morrow. It's the old translation, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. No thought.

That's the old translation. The modern translation says don't be anxious about tomorrow. There really one no thought is better, because to be anxious and to be thinking are very closely related.

The entire teaching of Buddhism, the entire teaching of Zen, what they call the state of emptiness, what the scholars think about what did he mean by emptiness, and what the scholars call a nihilistic, life-denying teaching, what the scholars call an atheistic teaching, they're looking at that from the point of view of thought and totally misperceiving. The emptiness of Buddhism is simply this clear state of pure awareness of no thought. Just this unconditioned consciousness.

What is there to think about, to understand it? You can't understand no thought, and now you become intelligent. True intelligence is there.

And then thought may come in occasionally to translate something into words. It comes from that level of no thought. Realization.

And you're connected with the totality through that. The separation goes. The screen of mind, of conceptualization, the conceptualized sense of self, the me, goes.

And then you don't manufacture a conceptualized sense of self for the people in your life that you meet. That's the most dreadful thing that happens in relationships, that happens through mind, that you manufacture for other human beings, as you have done for yourself. You manufacture a conceptualized sense of self consisting of objects in consciousness, thought, movement, judgments, views, opinions.

And you fix the human being as you fixed yourself into a little story. And then you fix the

other. And that's what humans do to each other.

And when you fix the other, all you see is what comes back at you from the other human being is confirmation that your conceptual identity that you imposed is correct. Because now all you can see is evidence for your projection. And this also applies for people who have a strong conceptual world view, as most have.

This is how the world is. This is how humans are. Some people have manufactured a conceptual identity for humanity.

And they might say they're all greedy and deceiving. That is how humans are. Some people have that view.

Maybe as children they were deceived by their parents, who knows what happened to them. And they developed concepts of how things are. And that filters out everything else that doesn't agree with the concepts.

That's all you meet then are greedy and deceiving human beings. Because all you have is your concept. A loving human being you wouldn't be able to see, because you see reality through the screen of conceptualization.

And that screens out a lot that doesn't fit into that screen. And this is what humans are trapped in. That's the human condition.

That's what the Middle East is trapped in. That's whatever they are fighting, tribal warfares and religious wars. And a totally conceptualized identity for themselves and others.

Trapped in thought. Completely trapped in thought. And so you can do anything to another human being.

Because you've already reduced that human being to a lifeless concept. If you can impose the concept non-believer. Let's say you are christians used to do it.

Now muslims tend to do it. Some of them. Not all.

A few. Non-believer is enough of a concept to reduce that human being to a lifeless mind object. And then killing a non-believer is totally justified.

Because not a human being. It's a non-believer. It's a concept.

And christians used to do it. You don't believe exactly what we believe? Okay, we're going to kill you.

Such is the human condition. And if you don't kill them physically anymore, you kill them in different ways. You have already killed them by imposing a conceptualized identity on

them to yourself.

That is the primordial act of violence. And other kinds of violence come out of that. And it is the human condition.

And we are going beyond it. We are coming to the end of that. It is, you can see how it, how closely it is all related to thought.

And to knowing nothing beyond thought. It is the end of the dimension of thought. To be trapped in that.

Humanity is coming to the end of that. If it doesn't happen soon enough, they will be gone. It was a little experiment in consciousness.

Fine. It worked while it worked. And then consciousness moves through other channels.

It has, you know how vast the universe is. Any channel, it will flower through. Who knows?

Other life forms, other planets. But there's a good chance that humans will make it. Because we are here.

That's a good sign. Another good sign is that vast numbers of people seem to be interested and drawn to and open to the power of now. I'm using that in a wider sense.

I'm not just speaking of the book. But the power of now as the new consciousness. They are drawn to that.

And it's happening more quickly than I could ever have realized. So there were places on the planet where already the new consciousness manifested. They came up as a wave and then subsided.

And then there came another wave of the new consciousness arising. And sometimes there were, within one century, many people in different traditions bringing in something new. There is a readiness.

It's been there once. It leaves something behind. It's everywhere on the planet now, that openness.

So that's good. But what really matters is you. You cannot try to be free of thought.

That would bring in thought. But you could say, let's see if I can allow myself to be free of thought. There's no trying.

Can I allow? Or maybe not yet. That's okay.

Between this tree and that tree, there's a space of just walking. And it's maybe a few

steps, but you don't count the steps, because there's only one step. So between the two trees, that physical space has become inner space of no thought.

You're looking at that tree and walking. And then there's another tree, a space of, as you're walking between the two trees, a space of no thought. It's beautiful.

Every time that happens, there is a burning up in you of past, of past mind structures, of accumulations of past, even of past pain. Because in presence, which is the state of presence, the past becomes burned up in you, the accumulated past in you. And so the accumulated past in you in the East is called karma, the unconscious identifications, and deriving a sense of self from them.

And it's becoming burned up even more strongly as we sit here, being consumed in the fire of presence. And that's a wonderful thing. There are a few people who are not yet ready for it.

And it sometimes happens that somebody runs away from a retreat. I'm not quite ready yet to be burned up. So I want to keep the past.

I'm not saying, of course, that you're losing your memories. That's not it. But past as a conditioning, identification with the conditioning of your mind, the conditioning has less intensity to it.

Still conditioning, still the same conditioning, but it begins to fade out like a photo after a few years, fades out gradually. Any of the exits, of course, takes you to no thought. You can go there directly.

No thought could be considered as an exit in itself. But any exit takes you there. The yes to what is, is the end of compulsive thinking.

Because compulsive thinking is a denial and a resistance to what is. The inner body takes you out of mind, out of thought. Acute awareness of sense perceptions takes you out of thought.

They all do that. And then a time comes when you go there just directly. The final thing that some of you may know, you know Ramana Maharshi, the great sage who lived in the first half of the 20th century, a great teacher.

Somebody asked him, how can we know whether we are making any progress on the spiritual path? We don't know if we're making progress. And he said, oh, that's easy.

The degree of absence of thought is the measure of progress on your spiritual path. Oh, that doesn't give you much to think about. Could there be a next question after that?

[Speaker 2] (4:43:53 - 4:45:29)

This concludes session four of realizing the power of now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session five.

[Speaker 1] (4:45:56 - 4:54:59)

There may be some questions this afternoon, unless they've all dissolved. I would encourage practical questions rather than theoretical questions. That would start like, I'm curious to know whether, just a little bit to add to what we were talking about yesterday.

Sitting with a craving, feel that craving on an energetic level without acting upon it, but simply allow it to be there. And that craving could be anything. There could be the craving to avoid some kind of suffering that is here now, the wanting to run away from it, if only into thinking, into making a story out of it.

But to just stay with that, allow it to be, and then something happens. A space develops between the craving and you. A space around the craving develops as you sit with it.

And that's the space of consciousness. So it is a very helpful practice when something like that comes to use it as a meditation. And when you sit with it and accept it, and after a little while you notice that acceptance of the craving, or the craving is a strange energy form inside you, very strange.

You don't even label it craving anymore. It's a strange, a pull, a wanting, a needing. And so you watch that, allow it, and through the allowing, consciousness comes about that is around it.

So one could say this kind of practice can, if done rightly, generate consciousness. So if suffering is used rightly, it can generate consciousness. It ceases to be suffering also immediately.

Suffering nearly needs somebody to complain about it. Then it's suffering. Then the pain is left.

Or perhaps craving could be called a form of pain, some form of pain. And even that, perhaps we don't need the label for that either. Pain, craving.

No, there is something there that we don't need to find a concept for, a pull. You can feel it without making a concept, and sit with it and see it's not going to kill you. And be with that for a while, and feel the force behind it.

You don't need to find things to create pain as they used to do, and in some places still do. We've talked about that, these certain ascetic spiritual practices, depriving yourself of food, and you feel the craving for food, and you sit with that. A lot of the time that doesn't work, because there's somebody doing it, wanting to achieve something through

it, and very often claiming some kind of achievement, that I managed to sit here without food for a week, or whatever it is.

And feeling enhanced in what is ultimately an enhanced conceptual sense of self, as me, the great ascetic. And if you live in the right country, like India, they might admire you, because they know that sometimes that actually works. It's rare.

In the West, you don't get much admiration if you sit as a yogi. They will probably lock you away. So that's, it's not so satisfying from an ego point of view.

Austerities in the West are not highly regarded anymore. But there is a, there's an underlying truth there, although when it's practiced, it doesn't work when you try to make, produce suffering in order to generate consciousness. Better leave that alone.

The suffering that comes naturally is much better to work with. And then you find the right attitude to suffering, and you get down to the most basic level of suffering, which is just what you feel right now, on an energetic level. And allow that.

Then, yes, through the allowing, that generates consciousness. And that is the beginning of the end of the pain as suffering. Conscious suffering is the beginning of the end of suffering.

It could start with a little thing, like you feel unhappy. There's this feeling inside you that the mind calls unhappiness, sadness, whatever it may be, some, or a mood you wake up with. And then you notice it.

And there is, it's an energy field. A mood is an energy field. There's a weight on you.

And then you watch that, and allow that, and accept that. Okay. Bring acceptance to it.

Immediately, a little bit of space you notice is around it. Space consciousness arises. And as you sit with it, more space, it deepens.

Until there's more space than whatever manifests there in space. The space becomes much vaster than that which appears in it. That's called liberation.

And then you could still, you could have some energy field inside you, temporarily, like a mood. Maybe it's coming through external influences, passing through. It won't linger for very long, if it cannot use your mind.

And then you feel that. And so you use those things, and they generate, one could say they generate consciousness. And that's beautiful.

Pain can do that. And that's the beginning of the end of it. So, if you're lucky enough to have some cravings left in you, you can work with them.

Let's see if there are any questions.

[Speaker 2] (4:55:04 - 4:55:34)

Well, I don't know if this is a practical question or a theoretical question, but I've had energy release work done on me. And I actually, there's a noticeable difference in my continence, I guess. And that was mostly, I think, from this lifetime.

Would it be helpful to find a person to help with past lifetimes, thousands of years ago, or something? Or would just sitting intensely present do the same thing, or a combination of both?

[Speaker 1] (4:55:34 - 5:17:11)

Okay, thank you. Thank you. The focal point, if it is to work, the focal point of any work to do with energy release is bringing presence into what is now.

So, whatever is there from the past will manifest, can only manifest at this moment. So you work with whatever manifests on an energy level at this moment. The origins of certain energy fields, such as pain body, may go back a very long time.

They go back a very long time, whether you look at it from the perspective of your personal life or past lifetimes, or they go back a very long time also from the perspective of the collective human experience of pain. So certainly, everyone carries inside an accumulation of pain from the past that may go back a long way. How long?

Who knows? Perhaps it goes back to when you lived in the sea and were eaten a million times by some other sea animals, and finally you made it onto land with as yet undeveloped feet, and then were eaten another million times. Could be.

The pain goes back, and then certainly when humanity, through the increasing dysfunction of the human mind, created an enormous amount of pain for itself. So that is there. It sometimes happens that you remember something that happened in the past that contributed to the pain that lives in you now, still on an energy level.

A flashback, a memory may come, an image may suddenly appear in your mind, and that could be from your childhood, it could be from another lifetime, it could be, who knows? All humans are so interconnected, and basically whatever happens to one human happens to the organism that is humanity. One could look upon humanity as one single organism.

On a deeper level, there's only one of us. And all the pain, if you believe in reincarnation, I'm not saying yes or no, because I don't want to bring up anything here that requires belief on anybody's part, then of course that means you have gone through all possible human experiences, including very painful human experiences already, if you have had

many lifetimes. If you don't believe in reincarnation, then you have inherited genetically, by the simple fact that you have a human past, are born on this planet, you have inherited genetically pain that many, many other humans suffered.

It comes to the same thing, that many humans have suffered it, and it is from the past. The essence of the release, of bringing presence to it, and acceptance, is not the memory of the origin, of where it all started, because nobody knows where it all started, but to be present with what manifests at this moment. The pain body will manifest because it is triggered by something that happens now, and then the past comes up in you, and it is here now, and this is where it needs to be addressed directly.

Directly on an energetic level, not even on a thought level, but placing attention on it directly. Attention is the key, because attention is presence. Just to look at it.

We spoke of developing the ability to look at something, such as a tree or a flower, in the state of spacious awareness without labeling, the ability to look in that clarity of awareness, in which, from the point of view of mind, you neither know nor understand what you are looking at. And yet, a deeper knowing is there in that looking, and a greater intelligence is there that operates when you face it and look. And in the same way that you can look at a tree or a flower, or that you can listen to a sound in the space of awareness, without interpreting, without labeling or making some kind of personal reference point, without really a personal relationship to that which arises in your consciousness, to simply be there as consciousness, witnessing that which arises in yourself, in that field of consciousness. And in the same way you are there as consciousness, the conscious witness of that which arises, in the same way that you witness an external sense perception, you witness an inner arising of whatever that may be. And that witnessing, even the conceptual label of calling it by a name, even the name pain body, is not really necessary.

All that is needed is looking. Now, looking becomes, we're now using it, of course, metaphorically. It's no longer an actual visual looking, but it is a feeling, a sensing, a bringing of awareness to it.

In that sense, you're looking at it and be with it. And in there you don't need any labels. The looking is enough for the transmutation to happen.

The ability to give full attention, which is the light of unconditioned consciousness shining upon something, this works with yourself, giving full attention to something that arises within yourself, it also works with other people, people who come to you with whatever, whether you are professional worker, whether you work with people professionally, or whether people are drawn to you seeking this or that, because they may recognize something in you.

And at that moment, as they come to you, as they sit there, are you able to give the

fullest attention, which means focus awareness without the interference of thought, of concepts, of judgments, of conclusions or interpretations, just the space of awareness. That is the space that you bring, not as a person, not even as somebody saying, I am going to bring space. No, it happens.

And so that is the greatest, really the only true healer on the deepest level, using the term healing in the widest sense, it is that. And of course, people have done little experiments. You probably read about, they had plants there, some plants were given attention, other plants were not given attention, but all the food and water they needed.

And the plants that were given attention thrived much more. They even did, it was a long time back, nowadays, it would be, nobody would be allowed to conduct such an experiment, but they did, many years ago in an orphanage, all the babies were divided into two groups, some were given all the care they needed on a physical level, but little or no attention, and the others were given plenty of attention. There was an enormous difference in the way that they grew and developed, intelligence, physical, on all levels, a vast difference.

And those people who did that probably didn't have that much awareness. When they were focusing on the baby, there was probably 90% thought and 10% attention, and yet even that was enough to effect that transformation. And so imagine the power that lies behind that, when there is little or no interference by thought.

Really, this is what our entire gathering is about, is to see that that can arise from within you. We've called it by different names, presence, space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness, spaciousness, awareness, these are all just little pointers. It all comes down to this simple thing, to fully be with something or someone.

I mentioned nature loves that, it loves to be noticed by humans, not to be thought about, but to be truly seen, perceived, experienced. It responds to that. Animals love it, they come.

The more you can be in that state of pure attention awareness, the more animals will want to be close to you. The cat comes, and the cats even come to humans who are burdened with thought. Well, just not to all, they're careful.

They look first, and sense. If there's any wanting in you, the cat won't come. Because as you know, cats never do what you want them to do.

But there's simply an availability. You are there, and you might show that you're there. You may kneel, and just go, then, especially if you're still.

Even wild animals sometimes do that, if you're still enough. They come because there's nothing to fear. Animals really can sense the human mind, and they fear it.

And they can also sense that the human mind, to a large extent, is insane. They can feel the violence that is in the human mind. They can feel the violence that is in thought, in someone who is totally obsessed with thought, possessed by thought, and walking through a forest.

And so they run away. They run away because animals, and trees, and nature lives in no thought. It lives in that state.

It's prior to thought. We are moving past thought. And so when we say, stop thinking, it's not to do with falling back to a level that is pre-thinking, the level of an animal or a plant, which is beautiful.

It's free of the burden of conceptual thought, therefore lives in a much greater harmony with the whole. Everything in nature does, lives in much greater harmony than humans with the totality. Humans don't live in harmony with the totality.

But we can't go back to that. We can see that there is a harmony in nature, but we can't go back to that level that is pre-thinking. Although we try, many humans try to go back there because they can't stand the torture of their minds anymore, so they might drink.

Drink takes you to a pre-thinking level if you have enough of it. One glass already does it a little bit, a little bit less, and another, and another, and gradually you get numb or you get anesthetized. And it feels good for a while because the mind slows down.

A few beers, the mind slows down, unless you're unlucky and because you lose consciousness, your pain body awakens, which also can happen with alcohol. Or certain drugs that kind of free you from the mind temporarily. Sex as an obsession of seeking, becoming addicted to sex, because momentarily you're free of mind through that.

And then the mind is back. So the same thing happens when you drift off to sleep or you watch television for a few hours. A certain anesthetic is there then, and the mind becomes numb and you stop thinking.

And finally you're half awake and half asleep, and at least you're not burdened by your problems at that time. You're falling below thought. And there are people who exist on that level, and in some ways they are wiser than those who have already reached thought, which is the majority.

In some ways there is such an archetype, one could almost say, as the wise idiot. And they have examples of that in literature, and the fool, the wise fool. We have examples of that in literature and in films I've mentioned before.

Forrest Gump is an example of somebody who is pre-thought, but lives in greater harmony with the whole, and the whole supports him, always gives him what he needs. In that sense he's enlightened, except that he hasn't gone beyond mind, he's remained

below mind, below thought. Being There, played by Peter Sellers, a long time ago.

Again, a human who lives in a state of connectedness because thinking hasn't arrived yet. He can hardly put a few words together, and life just gives him what he needs. It's a little bit humorous, of course.

And at the end of the movie and the book, he's about to become president of the United States. Everybody thinks he's incredibly wise. He says very little, compared to the politicians who speak a lot.

Everything is well in the garden. Oh, you mean the economic situation is picking up? Yes, when spring comes, the buds open and new growth happens.

Oh, okay, the stock market goes up. So this is just a beautiful example. They point to something.

How life can be when there's nobody claiming me, some achievement. So this is not our path. We can't go back there, although we may have tried in the past, to numb ourselves against the pain, and it hasn't worked, not for long.

So humanity is to step beyond being trapped in thought and mind, stepping beyond that. This is what is happening. This is why we're here.

And so, in some way, you arrive at the same place, because you find that place that is free of thought. Not that thought never happens again, but you're no longer trapped in thought, and there are beautiful spaces of no thought in your life that get bigger and bigger, deeper and deeper. And an intelligence then operates that is unconditioned, nothing to do with the accumulated knowledge of your mind.

And that operates then, and that is the awareness that shines. That is that which heals and transforms. It's the space in which transformation happens, within and without.

So here we have the answer then, of course, is the focal point is here, now, presence. Anything else that may come up as a memory, as a visual image, is fine, is to be acknowledged also. But not to seek there as seeking in past.

Thank you. What seems to happen to me is, I get to a state where I seem to be expanded, very few thoughts, and then I find I'm asleep. And that has happened to me over and over again.

So what do we do about that? Good point. I'm sure you're not the only one.

That can happen easily. The state of no thought is, first of all, relatively new for most humans. It's unfamiliar.

And you rise above thought into presence. And before you know it, it can happen that

you have fallen from presence into pre-thought, which means almost sleep. And this is beautifully expressed.

I always love it when the truth of this gets through and through the media and through movies. Ninety percent of it is still the old consciousness. But occasionally it comes through, and it's beautiful when it does come through in movies.

So there's this movie about playing golf, The Legend of Bagger Vance, it's called. And there's somebody who is learning to be present, to learn how to play golf again. And the archetype of the teacher comes, the caddy or whatever it's called.

So he teaches. There's one line in the film, it's worth watching the whole film for that. And also to see when he's actually in the state of presence, how his face changes and the clarity that comes.

No thought, and he lifts up.

[Speaker 3] (5:17:24 - 5:17:25)

Beautiful.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:28 - 5:30:14)

And his teacher says to him at some point, this I believe it's a background narrative, he's learning to stop thinking without falling asleep. He's learning to stop thinking without falling asleep. This is what we are learning here also.

And it may well be that you still fall asleep at times when the mind stops for a little while and gone. That can happen. We are transitional, at a transitional stage between two levels of consciousness.

Another thing that was mentioned to me this morning, I can step out of mind for a moment and then very quickly mind is back. Of course, that happens to everybody. And you may have to step out of mind a hundred times, a thousand times, ten thousand times.

That stepping out is the transformation of consciousness. It doesn't matter if you can stay in the state of clear presence for ten seconds or one minute at a time. The important thing is you have stepped out of mind.

That is the process of transformation. There's no achievement here. It is more important how often you step out of mind than for how long you can stay in the state of presence.

Because ultimately the state of presence is a timeless state anyway. You can't even measure it in terms of time. So that's a relief to know.

More important how often you step out than how long presence can be sustained. But there tends to be a certain reciprocal, if that's the word, movement. The more often you step out, it tends to happen that you stay in it a little bit longer, a little bit longer.

But it doesn't matter how long. And if you catch yourself being immersed in thought and suddenly you see it, and then you use what we called earlier the exit doors that take you through which you can go to step out of identification with thought, which could be total acceptance of this moment as it is, puts an end to thought. Or feeling the inner energy field of body takes attention away from thought, the aliveness in every cell, feel that.

Or bring full attention to sense perceptions, visual or auditory or tactile, and realize the power of attention that is behind the sense perception, this presence. So these are ways in which you can step out of thought. Or the direct one, you may remember, the direct exit door, which is not yet accessible to so many, which simply says stop thinking.

But they all take you to the same place. So once you notice, then you can step out. And then perhaps a moment later you're drawn back into the same, through the same door, thought draws you back by the sleeve, it's still got you.

And something else is important again, that is not now. Some thought assumes an importance, such importance that your whole sense of self goes back into it. And you're thinking this important, heavy thought.

If anybody observed you from the outside, you could see so clearly the difference in your eyes, or anybody who is sensitive, you don't even have to be a psychic, to sense that the emanation that comes from you, when you are possessed by thought, how different that is from the emanation that comes from you when you are clear. You just look into a person's eyes and see that the moment they are identified with thinking, it's like a veil has descended. They are here, but not really here, because their attention is in thought movement.

They may be looking at you, but they're not really looking, they're looking at their thoughts, they're in their thoughts. Not even looking at their thoughts, they're in their thoughts while they look at you. And you think they may be listening to you, they're listening to their own thoughts, they're in their thoughts preparing what they're to say to you next, or judging what you are saying to them immediately, classifying it, comparing it to what they know, or their opinion, or their mental position, or trying to figure out where you're coming from, what makes you tick, to work out something through the mind. And so there's the veil, they are not looking, it looks as if they were looking, but they are not, because there's a veil across their eyes. And then, when that veil goes, you step out of thought and it's gone, suddenly there's almost a light that shines through.

And someone that dwells in presence, not even as a habitual state, but who's found already his or her home in presence, such as sometimes happens to people who go

through, death is approaching, it can happen to those people very quickly, that they become transparent, they become very, very, very present. All the mind forms are dying already, all the object consciousness, and there's just light shining through. So that's, you can see that in people, and in yourself, notice the difference, the feeling tone of those states of consciousness, mind and awareness.

Object consciousness, obsessed with things, outer things or inner things as thought, and possessed by things, and then space consciousness. So, be patient with yourself, you may get drawn back into thinking many, many times, and then you step out, you may fall asleep, and what you're learning is to stop thinking without falling asleep. And in the meantime, you fall asleep a few times, that's okay.

Don't attempt to stay present for too long, and not just in the state of presence. Bring presence into doings, then you're less likely to fall asleep. Bring, of course you could be present by just sitting here, sitting, closing your eyes, that's dangerous, because that takes, that's a signal, it's been there for a long time, that means sleep.

Or keep your eyes open, helps a little bit, and look around, okay. But why not bring presence into some move, where there's movement, presence as you take off your shoes, you're not making it your means to an end. This movement is not a means to the end, which I want to get this shoe off, but to be there with every movement, fully there with your attention, so there's the movement, and there's the attention, the spaciousness in which the movement happens.

And then the other shoe, and you put it down. Any little movement like that, bring presence into that, then sleep isn't a problem there. Walking, I mentioned, from this tree to that tree, be there in every step.

Drinking a cup of tea, no, your whole life will not be that, there will be perhaps 80%, 90% is still the normal way, things are a means to an end, let's get this done and this, but then more and more there are things that are done in awareness, with awareness. So all the repetitive things that one does in daily life, many of those can be used beautifully to bring presence to. I mentioned a few in the book.

You get into your car, if you have a car, the door shuts, and there's a moment of 10 seconds enough. It's how many times can you break the stream of thinking? How many times can you find a gap in the stream of thinking?

That's what matters. Not how long the gap is, how many times can you find a gap? So it's better to have mini meditations, maybe in one day you might have 10, 20 mini meditations, it's probably better than one long meditation, towards the end of which you go to sleep.

And I've seen many monks going to sleep in meditation, especially at four in the

morning. Another thing that happens when you find gaps in the mind stream, the mind stream itself loses some of its force. It's the enormous pull that it has, the enormous gravity of thought.

Thought loses its hold over you. It becomes a little bit loose. There's a space, because the gap is space, the gap in the mind stream is a space that arises, where space consciousness comes through, awareness unconditioned.

And so even the thought that still happens, you'll find more and more is recognized as thought, even as it happens. So there is some space even around the thought, which means your total identification with thought is going, is disappearing, is dissolving. Which means you no longer totally believe in every thought that comes.

You recognize it as just a thought, a fragment, a perspective, not the truth. All right, any more? There may be some more questions.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:17 - 5:30:35)

I have a question about what is called performance anxiety, like giving a speech or playing a musical instrument in front of people. And I get coaching from my music teacher, because that's where the struggle is right now, to use positive imaging.

[Speaker 4] (5:30:35 - 5:30:39)

I've heard this recommended for golfers too.

[Speaker 2] (5:30:40 - 5:30:46)

And it seems to me like if I start, I'm getting anxious right now because I'm reproducing the symptom.

[Speaker 1] (5:30:47 - 5:46:19)

And so if I image myself not having the anxiety, it doesn't seem to work. It's like there's a little battle going on between all I'm creating the duality of doing it right and not doing it right. I just wondered if you'd comment on the situation.

Thank you, thank you. Yeah, that's also an interesting question. Performance anxiety is not confined to performers, or rather one could say that every egoic entity, every mind, to invite us, just addressing is to start in a wider sense, performance anxiety.

Every egoic entity, which means every mind-made self, every story-based sense of self, me, image of me, self-reflected image of me, people have conversations with themselves a lot of the time. They address themselves as you. So you walk around with a phantom sense of self, and you say, that's me.

You're splitting, split into two. So you have a relationship with yourself, which is very strange. And cats don't.

So to some extent, every egoic entity plays a role. It's a conditioned role. It plays a role, many kinds of roles.

The role of man or woman, the role of your profession, the role of whatever the conditioning may be, your nationality, the role of your religious belief structures, the role of mother, father. Adult, even being an adult with that seriousness that goes with it, it's a role that you learn to play when you reach a certain age. It's about time to become an adult, get serious with life.

And then more and more, you're pushed into that role. You behave as a self-importance. And people get trapped in the roles completely, which is, of course, mind-conditioned mind structures.

And so there is underlying a continuous anxiety, which is performance anxiety in a wider sense. Because you have to, now you have to go into a new situation and you're rehearsing beforehand, what's going to happen? What am I going to say?

How is I going to react? You see others reacting to you, and you split yourself there. It's a projection of the mind, seeing yourself, self-consciousness arises, which is to see yourself through the eyes of others.

So what is, how can we put an end to all that anxiety and all that fear that comes with believing that you need to perform? And so it is strange when one gives talks not to know what's going to come out of one's mouth beforehand, which could be a source of great anxiety, potentially. What am I going to say?

Are they going to like it? They expect something. There's only one way out, and that is not specific to being a performer, and that is hold attention in the present moment.

And that is not easy if you're backstage waiting to get on. I was backstage a week ago in the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver to give a talk in the back room where they usually, the actors sit in front of the mirror getting ready. And there's a loudspeaker, and 15 minutes before the time was due for me to speak, a voice comes through the speaker and says, performance starts in 15 minutes.

Now that would be enough to create anxiety in anybody, that I have to perform. I didn't realize I had to perform. And five minutes beforehand, the announcement was even worse.

It said, five minutes left, five minutes to show time. And when I listened to that, I could feel a wave of anxiety running through my body, because I didn't know that was show time. But it also meant that I had to perform, and I had to do it in a way that I could It

passed through, and then I remembered that I wasn't going to give a performance at all.

And when I remember, oh, there's no performance. Oh god, that's good. The probably the most effective way of anchoring yourself in now and preventing the projection ahead, where you are going to be on stage performing, being watched by thousands of people, or hundreds of people, or some 10 people might be enough, is to use the anchor of the inner body.

So very, place attention in the inner energy field, as you sit in that room backstage, if that's what it is. Be fully present in here, in every cell. Your attention moves completely into the body, which is so beautiful and invigorating and enlivening to feel, to consciously inhabit the body, to feel the aliveness that is there in every cell, in every part of the body, and feel it as a single whole, and remain anchored there with your attention.

Then the mind cannot create images of yourself on stage, being watched, performing, which is the anxiety-producing mental image. So that is much more effective than what didn't work for you, creating an image of yourself performing well, or with confidence, or something like that. That may be a little bit of, can be occasionally a help to some people, but that's not the real thing.

That's just turning around the anxiety and trying to make it into something nice, but even behind that image of yourself performing well, there's hidden the anxiety still, because you never know what could happen. And so inner body awareness is a very powerful anchor for staying present, especially in such a situation. If you are fully present, the anxiety does not arise.

And that's, you can test it out next time, but it is better if you practice first, so that you don't just do it before some performance, but do it when there's nothing much happening right here at this moment. Why not to sense the aliveness that is within you now, in your hands, your feet. It's beautiful.

And occasionally there may be the mind will want to come in when you do that, especially before the performance. You will feel, as your attention is in the body, you will feel the pull of the mind can be very restless there, because the mind says, think about the performance, what's going to happen? And you will feel the pull of thought wanting you to think about that performance.

There's almost, you can almost physically feel thought wanting attention back, and wants to pull your attention out of the body. And you can, sometimes you may get fragments of thoughts, and you're over half back in thought. Anxiety comes back, and then you return fully into the body.

I remember I was someone in the more distant past. I felt performance anxiety just

walking into a room in which there were five people, four people, a casual social gathering. And there was a hesitation before I opened the door.

What am I going to say? And then you open the door, and then you sit down, and the performance then starts. You say something clever, or whatever, you quote someone, or or something witty, or you say something about somebody else that's exaggerated, so that everybody laughs, and so they feel accepted.

They have made a joke, and they all laughed. It's all performance. It's very normal.

But underlying it all, there's this continuous anxiety of, I'm not performing well enough yet. What a way to live. It's so normal.

You are performing if you detect a difference, and this you can do as presence arises. It'll be easy to see. Your power of self-observation deepens with the arising of presence.

If you detect in yourself a difference in the way in which you interact with the person who cleans your office, and the CEO of your corporation, then you are performing. If you detect a difference in the way in which you interact with the Pope, should you meet the Pope, and the roads to the street sweeper, then you are performing in both cases. And there's nothing to feel guilty about.

It's simply something to notice. And in the noticing, already there's the arising of freedom, because the noticing is the arising of awareness. You don't need to condemn yourself for the fact that you are still performing.

You're just noticing, performing. There's a nice story of, it's somewhat related to this. There was the abbot of a big Zen monastery in Japan a long time ago, and the monastery was about to receive an important visitor.

The governor of the state or the province was about to arrive. The abbot stepped outside to receive him. The abbot received the governor.

The governor stayed for a while. The abbot left. And in the evening, the abbot resigned.

And he went to become the disciple of another master in another monastery. And he was a disciple of that master for another 10 years. What had happened?

While he was waiting for the governor to arrive, he noticed the palms of his hands were moist. He was anxious, some anxiety. There was some moisture in the palms of his hands.

There was no moisture when anybody else came. So to him, that meant, the depth of my realization is not deep enough yet. So he left.

For 10 years, he was the disciple of another master. And then he returned to the

monastery and became abbot again. And that needs, it's a very subtle awareness is required to just, wow.

Now, you don't need to take such drastic actions. Besides, you're not abbot of any monastery, so you don't need to do that. Just noticing.

Just noticing. The noticing is beautiful. Anything you notice in yourself that is mechanical, anything you notice in yourself that is performance, that is conditioned behavior, is to be welcomed.

You could fall into the era of saying, you're not there. You're obviously not there. Look at yourself.

This is not the case. To see, it's beautiful to see it. Whatever it is that you see in yourself, the seeing is freeing.

In Zen, they go to extremes in their practice, and that's fine for them. It was fine for this abbot. It probably would have been enough to notice the moisture.

Is there any other questions? Feel free.

[Speaker 3] (5:46:22 - 5:47:18)

Along those same lines, I can see that when I'm doing a presentation or when I'm teaching, I kind of condition myself so that I have all of my notes, my presentation, I have everything. I know what I'm going to say. And they're available, so if I need to glance at them, I can do that.

And I'm very aware that if I could just allow myself to tap in more often to existence and inspiration, that it would be phenomenal. And I know that this is my safety net, and I guess it keeps me from the anxiety of what you once said about dreaming that you would be on stage and not know what to say next. So can you give me some guidance?

I want to move into that uncharted territory.

[Speaker 1] (5:47:18 - 5:58:44)

Good point. I remember the first talk I was asked to give. It was in London.

I met someone at a dinner or something. And at that time, I was already seeing people individually, occasionally, informally, people would come to me. We would talk, just being there, present space.

And I talked to that man at the dinner, and he worked at the Theosophical Society in London. And we talked for five minutes. He knew nothing about me.

And he said, I'd like to invite you to give a talk to the Theosophical Society. We need

people like you. It's okay.

And so that was the first kind of formal talk. And that was a little strange. So the date was arranged, and it had to have a title.

That's how it works. It needed to sound interesting. And I believe the title was The Spiritual Dimension of Psychotherapy, or something like that.

And about 35 people were going to come, or 40, I don't remember. And so it was an unusual situation for me to give a talk with a title, because when people came to me in sessions, I never knew beforehand what this was going to be about. And that's beautiful.

But there, my mind came and said, okay, now you better write something down, because you need to give a talk about this. And so I got one sheet of paper, and I wrote down, okay, Spiritual Dimension in Psych, okay, that 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, and then that looked too big. And then I took a little scrap of paper and reduced them to smaller points.

But I thought I needed that. So I walked in with this little piece of paper. That was my safety net.

And I put it on the desk, and I started to talk. And people listened. And then I came, their pause happened.

And then I looked. And that moment, the entire energy field in the room dropped, because mind came in. And I started to talk again.

It took a little while before presence in the room returned. And then it happened again. I came to the end of what I had to say.

People became restless and coughing. And so that was my learning at that time. That safety net didn't work for me.

And I realized afterwards, even if I'd forgotten three out of five of the most important points that I wanted to talk about, it would not have mattered ultimately. And so the next talk, there was quite a gap before anybody invited me to give a talk again. And the next talk was without a scrap of paper.

And it was strange to sit there, not knowing what to say beforehand. I never knew what to say beforehand when people came one-on-one. That was normal and beautiful.

But to be in a formalized, formal setting and not knowing what to say, they had to have that external structure of somebody's going to give a talk. That is a little strange, just as it was strange even now to hear through the loudspeaker saying, showtime, strange. And so just sitting there, and nothing came for a while, and then the words came.

And maybe I believe in the next talk later, I just said, okay, so here we are. That must be

true. Here we are.

And that was, it's the rest came out of that, of being here. Here we are. Nobody could argue with that.

And then I've later heard many accounts where people have told me, people who were speakers, what they said when they abandoned their script, either because they lost it or some pages were missing. They were going through their speech and suddenly they found they must have fallen out. And so they were forced to address the audience directly.

Or people who suddenly, for some reason, the script wasn't there and they said, the performance came to an end. Something went wrong in their performance. They had to stop speaking.

For the first time, they were not performing and they were saying, I'm feeling very anxious at this moment because I don't know what, I've lost my script and I don't know what to say next. Okay. Now you've connected with the audience truly because that is the truth of how you feel at this moment.

People love to hear the truth. The moment you speak the truth, there's a connection. And then they found what they said was much more powerful than what could have been in the script.

Even if they missed some important details, that didn't matter anymore. And so my recommendation is to just go in without the script, without the safety net, to trust and if there's fear, allow that fear to be there. And maybe even say, this is the first time that I'm conducting this workshop with no script whatsoever.

What you need to know, there are two levels to the work you do. There are certain things that you may need to know that you do in your workshops. You know that anyway.

That's there. The more important level is that which arises intuitively out of that moment. And that can only come fully, it probably comes to you even with the safety net here and there, it comes through.

But it comes more fully when you let go of the safety net of the script. Then it truly comes because it has to come. And it doesn't come fully until it has to come fully.

There is the need for it to come fully. As long as the need for it to come fully isn't there, it's not coming fully. And so it is also the case with people who feel called upon to teach in a wider sense as some kind of spiritual teaching.

And very often I hear people say, I don't feel ready yet to teach. And you'll never feel ready to teach. Because the beauty is, you don't need to do it.

Just be there as all you need to do is to open up the space for the teaching to happen. You don't need to teach as long as you think you need to teach. That's dreadful.

I would live under continuous stress if I thought I had to teach. Another retreat. And each time they expect me to say something.

Great stress. But fortunately, I don't need to teach. Space consciousness, pure, the field of awareness is there.

And out of that, the teaching comes. The words come just right for that moment. So a person is never ready to teach.

And if a person thinks he or she is ready to teach, no. It's an illusion. There's some big ego that says, I am going to teach.

The person doesn't feel ready, but the depth is ready. Who you are in your depth, that's ready. And that's you and not you.

It's you and yet deeper than you. Because your ultimate essential identity is space consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness. In that sense, you teach.

And so that's the beauty. The same with healing. It's not healing.

A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, the healer does not heal. He lets healing be. And this can be applied to perhaps any activity in which there's mastery.

A teacher doesn't teach. He lets teaching be. He lets it happen.

Jesus said it. I'm not doing it. I'm not saying it.

The Father, he used this term, Father, so that the people in his culture would listen to him. He had to use patriarchal language in a patriarchal culture. Father was an authority figure.

So that people could even understand him and not run away. He would say, the Father is speaking through me. But all that it means is, something greater than me is speaking through me.

And so let me know what happens. It will be beautiful. I know that.

Very beautiful.

[Speaker 2] (5:58:45 - 6:00:16)

This concludes session five of Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Our program continues with session six.

[Speaker 1] (6:00:18 - 6:57:20)

I may ring this bell a few times during our meditation. The bell is a call to awakening. Awakening out of thought into presence.

The shift from thinking to awareness. That's why we're here. Noticing the silence.

That in you which notices the silence is not thought, is not thinking. It is stillness. Presence.

If or when thought still comes, you can recognize it as the movement of thought, without being completely drawn into it. Allowing this moment to be as it is, takes you out of thought. Noticing silence takes you out of thought.

Feeling the aliveness of the inner body takes you out of thought. And even noticing a simple thing like your breath takes you out of thought. Just noticing that you are breathing.

And the thinking that does still happen is just a surface phenomenon. Wave movements. A few sense perceptions are still there.

The voice that you hear. Some noises in the room. Not very much.

A few sense perceptions. Perhaps a few thoughts. Objects in consciousness come and go.

You could say that's the foreground which is what occupies most people's attention completely. And we are interested in the background. The space of awareness itself.

You can't know it. You can only be it. Can't make it into an object.

It's the I, the I am that remains when the story goes. The story of I am. Not trying to achieve a particular state.

That's a fallacy of the mind. Whatever state is there is good enough. It's enough to accept what's there internally, externally.

Nothing else is required but to accept what's here now. Mind is still active. So what?

Let it be active. That's what is. That's okay.

Whatever you accept you go beyond. That's a miracle. If you fight it, you're stuck with it.

Most meditators are attempting to achieve a particular state. Not happy with the state they are in. It's not the perfect state.

The perfect state is the acceptance of now. Yes, but I can't accept the now. Translated

that means I'm not willing to accept the now.

And then you accept that you're not willing to accept the now. The universe doesn't mind. Why should I?

Not willing to accept the now. That's good enough a state. It's interesting.

Drama comes out of it. All soap operas come out of it. Just being with what is.

Being at ease with is. And there's space around is now. The now is a strange thing.

Has no form to it. Becoming aware of now. Beyond what's happening now.

Of now itself. What's that? I don't know what it is.

Impossible to understand. It's not within the realm of thought. Being aware of now is the arising of space consciousness.

Object consciousness happens within it. Thoughts, perceptions, emotions. It is a sacred moment when there's a meeting beyond the person.

And there's a meeting beyond the personal sense of self. When there's no thought as you look into the eyes of another person through awareness. Not through thinking.

And then the meeting is sacred. Because that meeting is the realization of not two, but one. Not two, but one.

The two arises out of thought. The sense of separation. It comes from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

Good, bad. Good, bad. You, me.

So the realization that we are not two does never come through thought. It can be translated into thought. But the thought is not the realization.

You can believe in it. That's quite a nice belief. I believe that ultimately we are one.

To know it, you have to step into awareness and meet the other person, so-called other person, in the field of awareness. In the spaciousness of awareness. And that's the true meaning of love.

The realization that we are not two, but one. Oneness. The most beautiful thing with your partner, your child, your parent, friend, is occasionally to look at them in that spacious awareness where there's no thought.

You may have to hang on to your inner body while you look. And you're rooted in being. Without space in the relationship, the relationship is condemned to conflict.

Any conflict that should still exist within the relationship is beautifully contained by the space. If there should be. But there will be far less.

And eventually none. And whenever you look at someone, if only briefly, and they may not even know it, in the state of no thought, of pure awareness, that awakens that state of consciousness in the other person. They may not even be aware of that either.

Something within responds. They may interpret that as liking you very much. As feeling good in your presence.

Because they're meeting themselves. And it's an amazing thing to realize that whenever you meet anybody and interact, that potential is there for this to happen. Just meet them.

In awareness. Not through the labeling mind. You surrender that.

If the mind should still label, you recognize it as mere labels. Don't believe in them completely anymore. And that one could say almost there's a transmission that happens then of presence.

And that transmission in which there is no intention in the sense that I am now transmitting something to you. I'm not doing anything. There's no intention of transmitting anything.

It simply happens. If there were an intention, I would be wanting something. I would be wanting more mind.

And that transmission awakens. It's beautiful. Of course, the transmission has already been here throughout these days that we met here.

Beyond the words, in this energy field of presence, it's happening. And now the added little thing of just briefly meeting face-to-face. If you're still sitting, you may want to sit there for just a little while contemplating the empty chair and realizing it's all within you.

It's always wonderful when a teacher goes to a class. Because then you realize that the essence of the teacher is here. The question that somebody just asked, how to step out of thought, how to transmute the pain body without using willpower, the answer lies in the alertness that is here at this moment, in which there's no violence.

Willpower is some form of wanting. One desire is stronger than another desire and overpowers the weaker desire. For example, somebody uses willpower to stop a craving for food, perhaps because their desire is to stay slim and attract a man or woman, which is a stronger desire than the craving for food.

I can't do it. Sometimes it works, but then you're still there with a burden of this very strong desire. The pain that sometimes comes, that every human carries within,

willpower to some extent and for a limited period of time could work.

And then inevitably, the pain will break through even the strongest will. That will is based on wanting to be enlightened, wanting to be a strong wanting, and that conflicts with what is there. You sometimes see it in western people more than eastern people, when they meditate, that there's a lot of will.

They do it so well. They sit there for so long. And if you look, there's a someone who wants something out of this meditation.

I'm going to get there, which prevents you from seeing that you're there already. A conceptualized sense of self comes in here that you want to reach. Now this question, I believe that you already know the answer to this question deep down, but your mind doesn't.

Trying to understand through further explanations, the meaning of presence, the meaning of yes to what is, in which there's no willpower, just an alertness that is both gentle and fierce at the same time. It reconciles the opposites. It seems impossible that there could be an energy field that is both gentle and fierce at the same time.

But that is how it is. It is both all embracing, all containing the field of space consciousness, of presence, of stillness, all embracing, all containing, allows everything to be. And another aspect of it, it cuts through time, mind.

Past and future fall away. Past on the left, future on the right. There's an alertness there that is totally free of wanting, and yet it is very fierce.

Wanting, of course, always implies future. You need, you want to get there. Wanting always implies here reducing this moment to something inferior to where you want to get, which is, of course, future, which is, of course, a mind form.

Because beyond the thought of future, there is no future. Where? You can't possibly find it or meet it.

During these days, the words that were spoken were signposts. Then there was the energy field, and as there still is, of presence, continuously here. Now, the mind cannot quite understand what that is.

And this is very helpful advice, perhaps, for all spiritual seekers. And that is to seek further differentiation of signposts. And that is, of course, something that the human mind does.

And many spiritual seekers get stuck there, especially those whose minds are highly developed, who are able to analyze, differentiate, think about, evaluate. They want a more differentiated signpost. And that is satisfying to the mind, but there is a point when

the signpost needs to be enough.

Further explanation will not get you there. A more elaborate signpost will not get you there. So, some teachings are very simple.

Zen are signposts that are really like a block of wood with a few something carved in. It takes one minute, a little sign. There it is.

And this is why, when you get a Zen answer, the mind can't quite follow. Is that it? And it's often happened that when Zen teachers gave an answer, then there was, I mentioned before, the famous Zen teacher whose only answer, whenever he was asked about the meaning of Zen, now this is the most rudimentary signpost you can imagine, is the only answer he would ever give when asked about the meaning of Zen, is he would raise his finger and look at you.

So, the learned professors, Buddhist scholars would come to him. They'd studied hundreds of sutras and ancient scriptures. And please, they come to the great master.

He was famous. Why, what is, can you please explain the depths of it? What is the meaning of it?

And some people who were very much in their minds, they even then said, did you hear my question? They didn't even see the signpost. And then you have teachings that also point to the truth beautifully.

For example, some of you may be familiar with the teachings of John Klein, a spiritual teacher who passed away a few years ago. Those are beautiful signposts also pointing to the truth that are as differentiated as you could ever find, except for some abstruse scriptures. But these are as differentiated as you could ever find, almost too differentiated, because they satisfy the mind.

Hmm. Krishnamurti, halfway, sometimes almost true signposts, they point to the truth, but almost too much satisfying giving in to the need of the mind to understand. And this is why many, Krishnamurti became quite, well, probably not depressed, but frustrated almost, sometimes, because so few people seem to get it.

Why don't you get it? He said during his talks. You come to listen to me for 30 years.

Why don't you get it? So to watch the mind and see that often it demands further differentiation, and this is not necessarily helpful, but just to look more deeply at the signpost and allow the space to arise. The signpost here would be a few words aligned with now, a yes to what is, the suchness of this moment.

Each of those statements is a signpost. And to look more deeply at any one, and as you look more deeply, not through analytical thought, but simply to look, then a space arises,

because that's what the signpost points to, and that is the answer. And you've stepped beyond mind.

So observing in oneself this tendency, the mental tendency, to seek more, because this is perhaps really what it comes down to. It is a characteristic of the human mind to always want more. It's not never quite enough yet.

And this can also manifest in the spiritual seeker as needing to read more books, and another, and another, and another. Maybe the answer is in that one. And so, to see when it's time to stop.

You can see that for yourself. Sometimes the teacher points it out to you. As now, it's time to stop the seeking process of the mind, look more deeply at what is already here.

Not analytically, just be with one signpost, with one statement, and see where that takes you. Then it works as it should. If there's any further question, then that comes from your mind.

Which may be formulating the next question. Nothing personal. That's what it does.

All you need to do is see that this is what it does. And then in the seeing, there's a freedom arising from it. It's formulating another question.

There's one other question somebody wrote to me on a note. Somebody who is not yet free of suffering, not quite getting there yet, and mentions the fear of loneliness. This person experienced loss of a relationship.

And most of the suffering seemed to derive from that fear of loneliness. This is what the note says. So you'll notice it.

The suffering does not arise from loneliness, but the fear of loneliness. That's a mental projection that says you are going to be alone for the rest of your life. And it's added to the story of me, the one who is now without a relationship, completely alone.

That gets incorporated into the conceptualized sense of self. And then you can think about how lonely it is not to have a partner. You probably won't find anybody ever again.

Staying with what is, is to single out this moment, just this. You may be alone, but not lonely. Lonely is a concept.

It's a story. You can't be lonely without a story. You can be alone without a story, but not lonely.

Lonely is already, even the word lonely is already a little story. I am lonely is a story. I'm alone is a fact.

And the fact is neutral. It's fine. I'm alone here.

And even that is not absolutely true, but relatively true like any thought. It's not absolutely true. You're not really alone on the deepest level.

You're one with all that is, but on a relative level, it's true. But no thought is more than relative. But I am lonely is already the beginning of a story.

And just to see that, and then simply always returning to the simplicity of this moment. And if at this moment, you should feel within yourself a sense of a little hole inside, like a lack, where once there was the partner, now there is a little empty feeling, a little hole inside. What could be almost a craving for someone, perhaps this is what it is.

It's hard to define what it is. Something big is missing in my life. It's just the feeling of it.

And that is something that then people construct thoughts out of that. Unhappy thoughts, unhappy me. Now what happens if, okay, if this is what you feel, stay with that, without demanding that you should not be feeling that.

And see what happens if you completely say yes to that feeling of lack. Completely say, well, there it is. It's there.

This applies to any feeling. It could be fear, a very common feeling. There it is.

Now fear is usually something people want to run away from internally. And so they may run away into thinking. Then fear becomes a fearful story, but at least the fearful story, you don't have to feel it directly.

The fear can become translated into a story. So you construct your nightmare out of the feeling. But the feeling itself, well, what happens if I say, just stay with that and accept totally that this is, it's here, that is.

Don't even need to label it anymore. Just feel that. It is.

See what happens to anything that you don't resist at all, don't run away from at all, that you face completely now. Face completely. See what happens.

I'm not promising anything. You find out for yourself what happens when loneliness, fear, whatever it may be, is faced completely. The fact being alone is faced completely.

The feeling of lack of something missing is faced completely. And then you'll see. So no promises, just something to find out for yourself what happens.

This is an ancient thing in fairy tales, and you may have found it in dreams. A monstrous presence in dreams, also sometimes it's an archetypal thing in fairy tales, is only monstrous as long as you're running away from it. Perhaps we've all had nightmares

where you're running away from something that you can't quite even see what it is, but it's dreadful.

And you're running away from it. And it occasionally happens that people stop and face it. And more often than not, the moment it's faced, it reveals itself to be quite benevolent.

A shift happens in the monstrous presence when it is faced completely. So anything that you feel, see, if you accept and face it completely, see what happens to it. And so it's a beautiful truth.

I'm saying this, but you need to find it out for yourself. Because anything you accept completely, you go beyond. It's quite amazing.

So watch out for the mind's tendency to want to construct a storyline, to add to the story of me, out of, especially out of feelings that you don't want to face. The mind doesn't want to, the egoic entity doesn't want to face. But then the feeling becomes a story.

The fear of what's going to happen, what the world will do to me, could do to me. Many of you are going home today. Well, not really, but you're either home already, or you won't be at home even at home.

Home already means home at home in now, to be at home in this moment, not to feel an alien here to this moment. Where is my home? It must be in some future moment, somewhere.

See, this is your already home. And then also the fear of losing your home, isn't very, because that's only an external structure. But that's all people have in the absence of truly being at home within themselves right now.

All they have is the external structure that they call home. And then even when the little thing like having to move home is called one of the most stressful experiences that a human being can face, after death, divorce, comes moving home. So as I often point out, you're not really going anywhere.

You don't really go anywhere, ever. Something remains. The scenery changes, different stage set around you as you move.

That's quite enjoyable. When you're not at home in now, you get attached to the external form of now. It could be then a feeling that now you have to leave this external form of now.

And it's painful. Or you've been longing to get away. Longing to get to your own bathroom again.

Your own bed, bedroom, your own kitchen, not having to line up for food anymore. And

then the strange way that the mind works when you finally get home to your own kitchen, then you suddenly think back and think, oh, that was so nice. A whole pizza.

You can observe your mind and laugh. So the essence of our gathering cannot leave you, of course, because it's the essence of yourself. And then you begin to enjoy the flux of forms around you instead of fearing it.

And to enjoy any place. Why not? Different, even an airport can be enjoyable.

If you don't have the mind form, the thought structure that says, this is an awful place. I wish I were somewhere else. Peace arises anywhere.

Anywhere that you bring the yes to. Your journey continues in two dimensions. Of course, your journey through space and time continues.

You're moving through space. The clock runs. Tomorrow comes and somehow, not really, but it seems to.

So you continue on your journey through space and time. And more importantly, on your journey, this is the horizontal dimension. And then the journey that has no time to it.

Why we call it journey, I don't know, because language is so limited. The journey in the vertical that goes deeper into now. The deepening of that.

[Speaker 2] (6:58:49 - 7:00:13)

This concludes Realizing the Power of Now with Eckhart Tolle. Music by Stephen McNamara. For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle, please visit the website of Namaste Publishing at www.namastepublishing.com or call 604-224-3179 or write P.O. Box 62084, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6J 1Z1. To learn more about Eckhart Tolle, please visit his website www.eckharttolle.com. And if you would like additional copies of this audio learning program or to receive a free catalog of audio, video, and music for the inner life, you can contact Sounds True at www.soundstrue.com or call toll-free 1-800-333-9185 or write the Sounds True catalog, P.O. Box 8010, Boulder, Colorado, 80306. Thank you for listening.